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METHODIST WORTHIES.

CHARACTERISTIC SKETCHES

OF

METHODIST PREACHERS

OF THE

SEVERAL DENOMINATIONS,

WITH

Historical Sketch of each Connexion.

BY GEORGE JOHN STEVENSON, M.A.,

AUTHOR OF "MEMORIALS OF THE WESLEY FAMILY"; "THE METHODIST HYMN BOOK AND ITS ASSOCIATIONS,"

LONDON:

THOMAS C. JACK, 45 LUDGATE HILL.

EDINBURGH: GRANGE PUBLISHING WORKS.

METHODIST WORTHIES.

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THE religious history of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries has been largely influenced by the steady but ever-increasing spread of Methodism, not only throughout Great Britain, but throughout the civilised world. Noiselessly it has been diffusing its influence through every town, and into all the chief villages in England, and many parts of Ireland, until now it has become one of the most important religious agencies in the land, and its members are nearly, if not quite, the most numerous of all the Churches.

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THE METHODIST NEW CONNEXION.
THE PRIMITIVE METHODISTS.
THE UNITED METHODIST FREE CHURCHES
THE BIBLE CHRISTIANS.

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCHES OF THE FOLLOWING WILL BE COMPRISED IN THE WORK.

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" Dr THOMAS COKE.
" Dr ADAM CLARKE.
" JOHN PAWSON.
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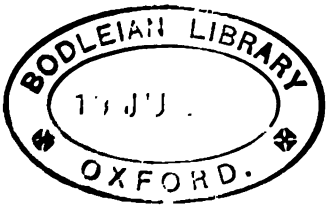
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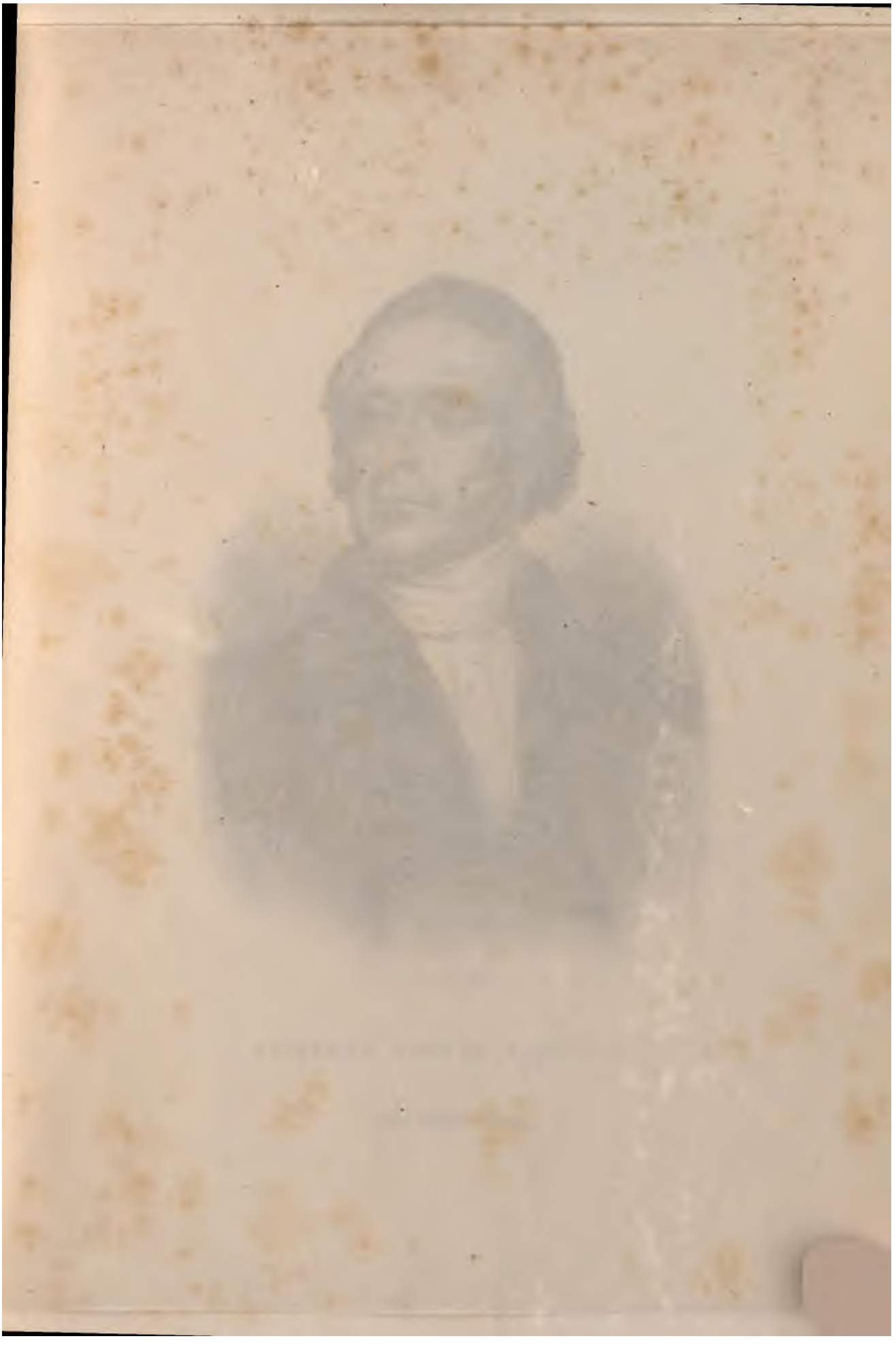

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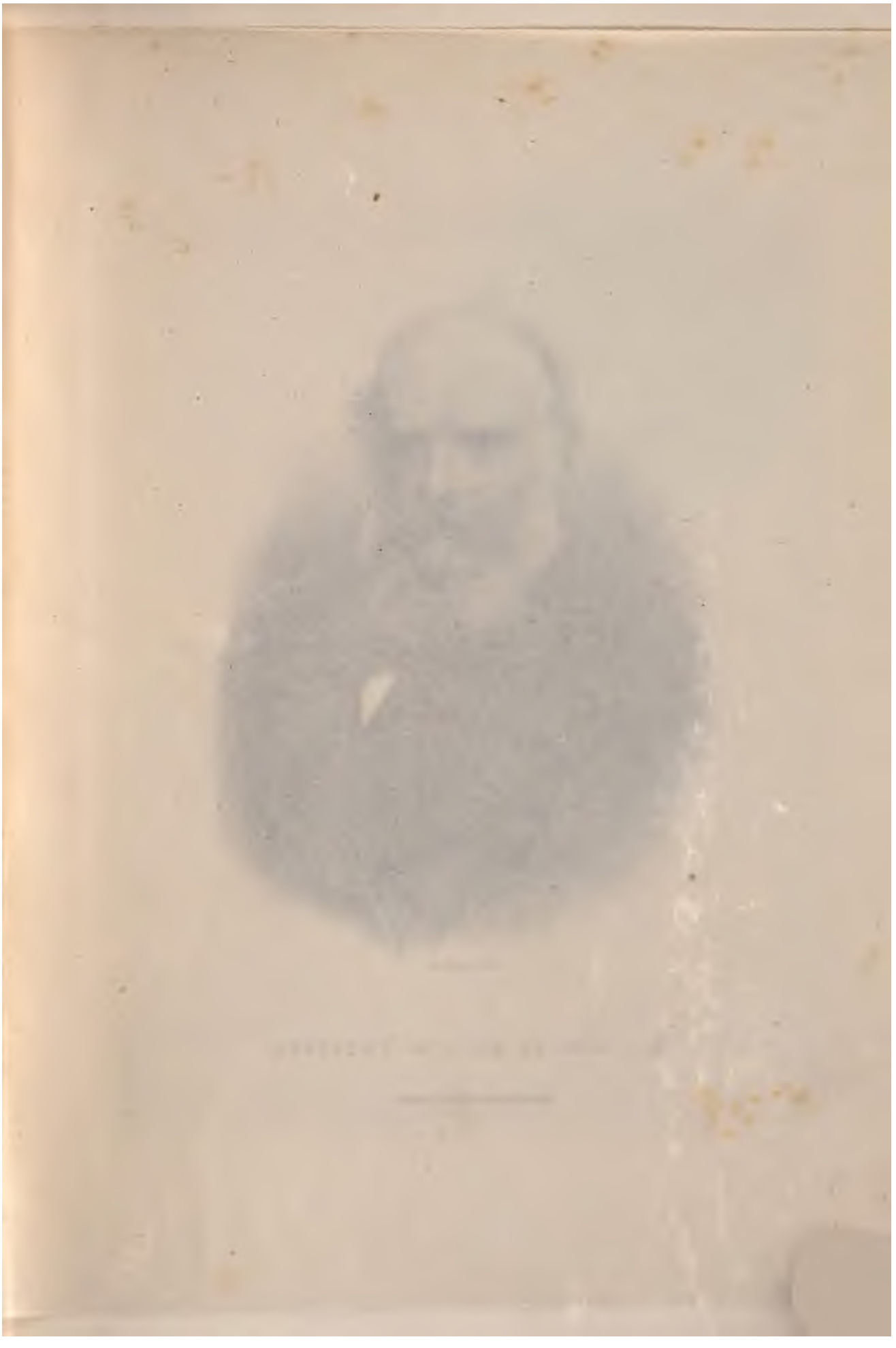

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A BRIEF HISTORY OF METHODISM.

Wesleyan Methodists.

METHODISM is an organisation of such wide extent and influence that it has of late years commanded respectful attention and consideration in circles where it had not previously been thought about, and where it was known only in name. A great Ecumenical Conference of Representative Methodists was held in the Methodist Chapel, City Road, London, in the summer of 1881, and the information presented to that Assembly startled many thoughtful people. When the daily press of the metropolis learned, as they did then for the first time, that the gentlemen forming that Conference really represented about twenty-four or twenty-five millions of adherents, the question was often asked during the sittings of the Conference, How has this mighty and extensive agency grown to such dimensions, and yet has made so little noise in the world? The fact remains indisputable; Methodism has extended itself into every country under heaven where the English language is spoken, and also into a score or more other countries where our language was unknown; for Methodist men and women have been found in sufficient numbers to learn the native languages of other lands, in order to carry to those countries the message of salvation by Jesus Christ. Methodism has by its emigrants and missionaries belted the entire globe, and now the sun never sets on regions which Methodism has not reached.

Quietly, steadily, almost noiselessly and unperceived, Methodism

has been pushing its victories from country to country, from island to island, almost from city to city, where English commerce reaches, until its adherents have been so multiplied that they now number a total nearly equal to that of any Protestant denomination on the earth. The progress is ever on the increase; and if in England during the year 1882, the new converts exceeded sixty thousand,—being more than one thousand each week,—the same ratio may reasonably be affixed to its operations in the other countries where it has obtained a permanent location. This unobtrusive evangelism is the result of loving hearts and willing hands working on the lines which the founder of Methodism himself laid down as their rule of action,—namely, to go and labour amongst those who not only need our help, but amongst those who *most need* our assistance.

When the New Year's Day of 1740 dawned on London, there were not fifty Methodists in the world. Fifty years afterwards, when the Rev. John Wesley died, the total number of Methodists in Great Britain, America, and the Colonies was only 136,622, but even then it had in it the germs of life, and life means growth and expansion. The judicious Wesley, as he lay dying in his own house in London, on reviewing his life-work, said of it, "What hath God wrought?" and then, after a rest and prayer, he broke out with the joyous exclamation, "The best of all is, God is with us!"

That was the secret of the success of Methodism from its origin: and with that Divine help accompanying the efforts of its ministers, missionaries, evangelists, and agents of every kind (and they are varied and well organised), a steady and ever-increasing multitude will be gathered under its sheltering wings. To-day, as much as ever in the past of its history, may every Methodist most fittingly say, "The best of all is, God is with us," as He was with our fathers.

Methodism has been the child of Providence from the day of its birth. It was born amidst troubles, contentions, strife, and opposition; but the experience of its first adherents led to its being readily adapted to their spiritual condition, and it was as admirably as it was promptly adapted to the circumstances of life. Methodism was scarcely two years old before it had within and around it almost as complete an organisation for the germs of a great religious Church or community, as it had

when it was a hundred years old. Even the name given to the new movement was one not chosen by its adherents. It was not liked by them at first, but it was thrust upon them. The following is what John Wesley wrote at the time the name was bestowed on his companions :—

"Of those who are called Methodists, let it be well observed, that this is not a name which they take to themselves, but one fixed upon them by way of reproach, without their approbation or consent. It was first given to three or four young men at Oxford, in 1729, by a student of Christ Church; either in allusion to the ancient sect of physicians so called, from their teaching that almost all diseases might be cured by a specific *method* of diet and exercise, or from their observing a more regular *method* of study and behaviour than was usual with those of their age and station. I should rejoice (so little ambitious am I to be at the head of any sect or party) if the very name might never be mentioned more, but be buried in eternal oblivion."

If the founder of Methodism did not either select or approve of the name thus chosen for them, neither did his followers; but the fact remains, they were called METHODISTS, and by that name they will be known, doubtless, to the end of time. Mr. Wesley's own designation of his adherents was "The United Societies"; and, in all legal documents, they were described in Mr. Wesley's days as "The People called Methodists." This is their legal designation at the present time in England. The official Hymn-book issued by the Wesleyan Conference is entitled "A Collection of Hymns for the Use of the People called Methodists"; and the same terms, "The People called Methodists," are used in the deeds of all Methodist trust-property.

Methodism really dates from the time of the conversion of John and Charles Wesley. Both the brothers were converted during the same week. John Wesley had been to America to try to convert the Indians, whilst he was himself unconverted. His mission there ended in failure, and the missionary was glad to escape from Georgia and return to England. His brother Charles had preceded him in his return home.

The conversion of Charles Wesley took place on Whit-Sunday, 1738, whilst he was confined to his bed by illness, at his humble lodgings with Thomas Bray, a brazier, living in Little Britain. The house was situated at the bend of the road, south side, nearest the Bluecoat School. John Wesley was deeply impressed that his younger brother should precede him in realising the blessing of conscious

pardon, and the witness of the Spirit. His mind was anxiously exercised during that Sabbath day, and on the Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday following. The evening of the Wednesday was the turning-point of his life, the time when he clearly learned, by the teaching of the Holy Spirit, what was meant by "Being justified by faith we have peace with God, through our Lord Jesus Christ." On that night there were planted in his mind spiritual seeds which germinated, and grew, and gave birth soon afterwards to the Methodist Society; and the agency God made use of was Martin Luther's Preface to the Epistle to the Romans. The time was Wednesday evening, 24th May, 1738, a little before nine o'clock; the place was "a meeting in Aldersgate Street," or, as far as can now be ascertained, a cottage meeting in Nettleton Court, which, at that time, according to the map of the parish, opened into Aldersgate Street. The court is still there, but is closed at the Aldersgate Street end, and is nearly opposite the buildings of the Young Men's Christian Association. Many American Methodists have visited the court; though but few English Methodists even know its locality. John Wesley's record of that evening, as found in his Journal, is as follows: "In the evening I went very unwillingly to a society in Aldersgate Street, where one was reading Luther's Preface to the Epistle to the Romans. About a quarter before nine, while he was describing the change which God works in the heart through Christ, I felt my heart strangely warmed. I felt I did trust in Christ, Christ alone, for salvation; and an assurance was given me that He had taken away *my* sins, even *mine*, and saved *me* from the law of sin and death."

That new experience opened up to both the Wesley brothers quite a new religious way of presenting Scriptural truths to their hearers; and the effect of this kind of preaching was, that whilst both had free access to many pulpits in the Church of England previously, the preaching of what was considered to be the new doctrine of salvation by faith, led to their speedy exclusion from nearly all the churches. One clergyman after another, after hearing the way of salvation so plainly stated in his pulpit, frankly told the Wesleys they could not again be permitted to preach in their churches. Having themselves entered into that new religious experience, the joy and peace they

found therein they could not restrain, and so preach they must; if not in churches, then out of them. In this way, in rooms, and in small societies, both in London and Bristol, they preached almost every day, with such marvellous results as had never before been witnessed since the days of the Apostles.

In a remarkable manner the Spirit of God gave most convincing evidence of the completeness of the change which had been wrought by faith in both the brothers. This was more distinctly and emphatically shown by the spiritual awakening which accompanied and followed the preaching of John Wesley. He had to preach in St. Mary's Church, Oxford, before the University. His text was, "By grace are ye saved through faith;" and he explained the new doctrine with a clearness, fulness, and force which had not been known before in that famous seat of learning. That sermon was printed and widely circulated. It was followed by another on "God's free grace," in which, with equal lucidity and power, he set forth the doctrine "that the grace and love of God is free in all, and free for all." This sermon was printed in a cheap form; and those sermons, repeated in various forms and places, "gave birth to the greatest revival of religion" the world has ever known.

He desired, in his own mind, to retire to Oxford to his beloved obscurity; but Divine Providence ordered otherwise, and John Wesley was detained in London and importuned to preach these new doctrines, in various churches, thrice every Sunday, and on week-days also. One source of attraction was that he had recently returned from America, which was considered a far country; and he related some of his experience in the course of his discourses. Multitudes flocked to hear him, and soon the churches were unable to hold the crowds which assembled. In a short time, partly because of the large assemblies and partly owing to the new doctrines, he was excluded from one church, then from another, till at length he was shut out of all the churches. Not daring to be silent, after a short struggle between honour and conscience, he made a virtue of necessity, and preached in the open air—first in Moorfields, London, then at Kennington, and in many other parts of England.

Thousands upon thousands of persons—in some instances ten

thousand, in others twenty thousand, and even more, as computed by Mr. Wesley himself, and recorded by him in his Journals—attended his out-door services. This step was not taken in any spirit of antagonism to the Church; quite the contrary. During one month in 1739, both John and Charles Wesley had interviews with the Bishop of Gloucester; Gibson, Bishop of London; and Potter, Archbishop of Canterbury, to talk over their conduct; and with kindly results in each case. Mr. Whitefield, also, had similar interviews with the bishops respecting his preaching in the open air. It is plain, therefore, that the resistance these three clergymen met with did not proceed from the heads of the Established Church, but from those of the clergy who were at ease in their comfortable livings, and who saw that their quiet enjoyment would be broken if the proceedings of these evangelists were not stopped. Hence it was that many newspapers and magazines were used by those clergymen to slander and misrepresent the work of the Wesleys and Whitefield.

During the summer and autumn of 1739, there were witnessed by thousands of persons most remarkable manifestations of divine power at many of the open-air services conducted by John Wesley. The preaching of George Whitefield and Charles Wesley, at the same period and to the same congregations, was quite as faithful and even more impassioned, at times, than was John Wesley's; but it was to the preaching of John Wesley only that those special manifestations were given. At London and at Bristol, on various occasions and at divers places, during the six months preceding the formation of the United Societies, scores of persons were smitten down under his preaching, in the open air and in small meetings in rooms; such signs had never been before witnessed in England. Mr. Wesley himself wrote: "More and more of the people were cut to the heart, and came to me all in tears, inquiring with the utmost eagerness what they must do to be saved." These penitents were counted by scores and hundreds during the autumn of 1739; and it was the witnessing of the deep agony of spirit and anguish of heart that awakened the sympathy of two gentlemen, who attended the preaching at Moorfields, to provide a place of shelter for those poor stricken ones.

Northward of the preaching ground at Moorfields—only a few

hundred yards, but surrounded by fields — the Old Gunnery, or foundry for cannon, had stood in ruins for more than twenty years. Mr. Wesley was pressed to take the premises into his own hands; but he had to decline, having no funds. Mr. Ball and Mr. Watkins, two kindly-disposed friends, finding that the tenancy could be secured for £115, loaned that sum to Mr. Wesley; but, as the place was a vast heap of ruinous buildings, a large additional sum had to be spent to fit it up as a place for religious worship. The roofless building, with tottering walls, was first used by Mr. Wesley, on Sunday evening, 11th November, 1739. The cost of fitting up the Foundry for worship was about £800, which sum was paid in three years by small subscriptions from many friends who had shared in the blessings which came with the preached Word.

The exact date of the origin of Methodism is not known; but it was during the three weeks embraced within the last week in November and the first fourteen days of December, in 1739. A large number of persons had been converted within six months, who had been joined to the Moravians. In Mr. Wesley's Works are found several allusions made by him to that period. The two following passages convey the clearest account we have: "In the latter end of the year 1739, eight or ten persons came to me in London, who appeared to be deeply convinced of sin, and earnestly groaning for redemption. They desired I would spend some time with them in prayer, and advise them how to flee from the wrath to come. That we might have more time for this great work, I appointed a day when they might all come together, which, from thenceforward, they did every Thursday, in the evening. To these, and as many more as desired to join with them, I gave those advices which I judged most needful for them; and we always concluded our meetings with prayer suited to their several necessities. This was the rise of the United Society; first in London, then in other places." The first meetings were class-meetings, and John Wesley was the leader. In another extract we find the following additional details: "The first evening about twelve persons came; the next week thirty or forty. When they were increased to about a hundred, I took down their names and places of abode, intending, as often as it was convenient, to call upon them at their homes. Thus, without any

previous plan, began the Methodist Society in England—a company of people associated together to help each other to work out their own salvation."

Such is the account of the origin of Methodism from the pen of its founder, who, in a small tract which he issued shortly before their organisation, thus describes the character of a Methodist :—

"A Methodist is one who has the love of God shed abroad in his heart by the Holy Ghost given unto Him: one who loves the Lord His God with all his heart, and soul, and mind, and strength. He rejoices evermore, prays without ceasing, and in everything gives thanks. His heart is full of love to all mankind, and is purified from envy, malice, wrath, and every unkind affection. His own desire, and the one design of his life, is, not to do his own will, but the will of Him that sent him. He keeps all God's commandments, from the least to the greatest. He follows not the customs of the world; for vice does not lose its nature through its becoming fashionable. He fares not sumptuously every day. He cannot lay up treasure upon the earth; nor can he adorn himself with gold or costly apparel. He cannot join in any diversion that has the least tendency to vice. He cannot speak evil of his neighbour any more than he can tell a lie. He cannot utter unkind or evil words. No corrupt communication ever comes out of his mouth. He does good unto all men; unto neighbours, strangers, friends, and enemies. These are the principles and practices of our sect. These are the marks of a true Methodist. By these alone do Methodists desire to be distinguished from other men."

For the first century of its existence, the history of Methodism was a series of providences. In a condensed record, which this is required to be, these providential openings can be very little more than indicated.

From the time the Wesley brothers returned from America, they were both closely connected with the Moravians, whose meeting-house was, and is still, in Fetter Lane. It is probably true that most of the accessions made to their Society during the years 1738 and 1739, were the fruits of the labours of the two Wesleys and Whitefield. Even after Mr. Wesley began his own Society, in December, 1739, he himself continued to meet with the Moravians; and he took with him many of those who adhered to him as the results of his ministry.

As early as June, 1738, John Wesley visited the Moravian settlement at Herrnhut, Germany, where he remained three months, conversing freely with the brethren on their doctrines and discipline. In December of the same year, Mr. Wesley drew up for the Society in Fetter Lane the rules of the Band Societies—companies of not less than

five nor more than ten—who met together once a-week for religious conversation and prayer. A series of nine questions was prepared and used on each occasion as helps and instructions; and the design of those meetings was embodied in a series of ten propositions and inquiries. These were the basis of the United Societies, which began to meet under Mr. Wesley in December, 1739.

In April, 1739, John Wesley was excluded from the churches in Bristol, and a few months later he was also excluded from the London churches. Mr. Whitefield and Charles Wesley were also included in the prohibition. Mr. Whitefield commenced open-air preaching near Bristol, with such happy results, that John Wesley soon saw a wide door of usefulness opened to him in that plan; and he readily adopted it, with such marks of Divine approbation as had not been before witnessed. This led to the commencement of the system of the itinerancy, and necessitated the employment of lay-helpers; hence lay-preachers had to be engaged to watch over the new converts, gathered out of the world by the labours of those apostolic men.

These lay-helpers were Joseph Humphreys, Thomas Maxfield, and John Cennick. The first-named is thus introduced to us by Mr. Wesley himself: "Joseph Humphreys, the first lay-preacher that assisted me in England, in 1738 [should be 1740]. He was perfected in love, and so continued for at least twelve months. Afterwards he turned Calvinist, joined Mr. Whitefield, and published an invective against me and my brother Charles. In a while he renounced Mr. Whitefield, turned Presbyterian minister, then received Episcopal ordination, and, finally, scoffed at inward religion"—a catalogue of delinquencies long enough to cause his name to be excluded from the true friends of Methodism. The date of 1738 is now found to be an error.

Thomas Maxfield was converted under Mr. Wesley's preaching, at Bristol, in May, 1739. He had an excellent gift for preaching, and was very useful in keeping together and instructing the young converts in London during Mr. Wesley's absence. Some churchmen raised a cry against Maxfield's preaching at the Foundry, and they sent their complaints to Mr. Wesley, in the country, who hastened to London to silence him; but on meeting his aged mother, who had heard Maxfield, she desired her son to hear him and judge for himself if he was

not qualified to preach as certainly as Mr. Wesley was. That wise admonition of Mrs. Susanna Wesley led to the regular appointment of Thomas Maxfield, early in 1740, to preach as a lay-helper at the Foundry. He continued in office at the Foundry some twenty-three years, and after Mr. Wesley's marriage, joined Mrs. John Wesley in her prejudices; and in 1763 he separated from Mr. Wesley, taking with him one hundred and seventy members. He gathered an independent congregation in London, to whom he ministered for many years; but was reconciled to Mr. Wesley before his death, and Mr. Wesley preached in his chapel in 1783.

John Cennick joined Mr. Wesley at Bristol, and was very useful in that city and at Kingswood; but not agreeing with Mr. Wesley's views on general redemption, he joined Mr. Whitefield, and became a useful itinerant minister in many parts of the United Kingdom, He died in the Moravian Chapel, Fetter Lane, London, 4th July, 1755.

In 1740, Mr. Wesley preached against predestination, and Mr. Whitefield published a reply in 1741, in which he advocated unconditional election, irresistible grace, and final perseverance. Charles Wesley's "Hymns" and John Wesley's "Sermons" being directly opposed to Mr. Whitefield's doctrinal views, a separation took place, which continued for many years; but Providence brought good out of what appeared to many, at the time, a serious evil.

On 23rd July, 1740, Mr. Wesley separated from the Moravians, and devoted all his time and energy to travelling and preaching.

In December, 1741, several disturbances having taken place at the services held by Mr. Wesley, one of the leading London magistrates voluntarily waited on the King, George II. In a few days, Sir John Gunson called on Mr. Wesley, on behalf of the city magistrates, and reported "that the Middlesex magistrates had received orders from above to do you justice whenever you apply to us." That spontaneous kindness checked the disturbances, and the London societies had peace ever afterwards.

In 1742, the societies having greatly increased, and numbering several thousand members, they were formed into classes of twelve or more persons, with a properly qualified person to lead them. In February, at Bristol, the same year, the debts on buildings were

mentioned, and offers were made to contribute a small sum weekly as the best way of paying the debts. Leaders were desired to collect what each member would give weekly, and a steward was then appointed to receive these amounts from the leaders weekly. Class-leaders and stewards were thus early chosen and appointed. The Select Society, or Band Society, consisting of justified persons only, was established in 1742. Members meeting in band had on their quarterly ticket some years afterwards, besides the usual distinguishing marks, a large B. Band tickets have been provided in England regularly each quarter ever since, but they are usually given now as ordinary tickets. Indeed, some of the preachers of the present time do not know what the letter B on the ticket represents.

Progress has marked the career of Methodism from the first day till now. The manner in which it took hold of the people at the beginning is the best evidence of its adaptability to their wants and condition. The rapid growth of the first Society, at the Foundry, is shown by the following figures, copied from Mr. Wesley's manuscript account of the London Society :—

April, 1742.—Members,	. 426	
On trial,	. 201—627	
Aug., 1742.—Members,	. 523	
On trial,	. 219—742	
Feb., 1743.—Members,	. .	1950
Dec., 1743.—Members,	. .	2200

Such was the advancement made in one Society only, 2200 members at the end of four years. Mr. Wesley himself wrote a record of both leaders and members, kept their names, with the separate classes to which they belonged. The original manuscript is still preserved ; and from the names there recorded, we can trace the origin of not a few Methodist families still existing in London.

Early in the first decade of Methodism, all the leading characteristics of its organisation were introduced. First was the manifestation by some person of a "desire to flee from the wrath to come." These persons were received on trial, and continuing to manifest that desire, they sought and soon obtained conscious pardon of sin, which was

followed by the witness of the Spirit. These were believers, justified persons before God; and they, seeking advancement in the divine life, separated themselves from the more elementary members, and formed, in 1742, Band Societies, for the guidance of which Mr. Wesley drew up a set of rules, which are characterised by piety, wisdom, and prudence. These rules were, in fact, first drawn up as early as 1738, for the Moravian brethren. What the Band Rules were, may be understood from the following questions, which those meeting in band had to answer:—

1. Do you know your sins forgiven?
2. Have you the love of God felt in your heart?
3. Have you the witness of the Spirit?
4. Have you power over all sin?
5. Do you desire to be plainly told of your faults?
6. Do you desire your heart to be searched?
7. Do you desire that we should tell you all that is in our heart concerning you?

Such was the rigid character of the spiritual investigation in band meetings. Men and women thus submitting to be examined before each other, it is plain that they must attain a high state of grace; and the result was seen in the spread of the work on every hand, wherever these exemplary lives were found. Because they had a divine life within them, filling them with joy and peace, and prompting them to seek to bring others into like experience, the work expanded, and deepened, even at a period of great moral darkness and turpitude.

Watch-night services began as early as April, 1742. The converted colliers at Kingswood first began them, as a substitute for their midnight meetings held at the ale-house. They began at eight or nine o'clock, and continued until midnight. Mr. Wesley at once approved, and fixed them, first monthly, at the full of the moon, then quarterly, and recommended them to all his societies. They are now held only on the last night of the year.

Quarterly society tickets were first given in 1742. For over twenty years these were issued in three or four localities, each having a different design. Inconvenience having arisen from these varieties, the ticket of one district not being known or recognised in another,

the Conference in 1765 ordered a uniform ticket to be issued from London, the first of which is dated February, 1766. For fifty years these tickets were only about an inch square—a very simple record—containing the date, a text of Scripture, and a large capital Roman letter enclosed in a simple border, with the member's name written by the preacher who gave it on the margin. In 1816, at the suggestion of the Rev. Jabez Bunting, the ticket was a little enlarged to give space within the border for the member's name. In 1822, when Mr. Bunting was Connectional Editor, he again altered the ticket, making it twice as large as before, and adding the name and origin of the society at the head. The design was thought by the Conference too fanciful; and three tickets only of that kind having been issued, it next was printed with a ray border around it, in 1823, and in that form it has appeared ever since. The tickets were used to admit the members to love-feasts, society meetings, and the Lord's Supper. The addition of a few lines by the preacher at the back of the ticket made it a pass-port for a member to any society of Methodists either in England or the Colonies. Some years ago a proper form for the removal of members was provided.

In 1742, Mr. Wesley and John Nelson itinerated through parts of Yorkshire and Cornwall, establishing Methodism in many places. The history of that period is full of interest.

On 1st May, 1743, the Rules of the Society were first published in a small tract of eight pages, with the title, "The Nature, Design, and General Rules of the United Societies in London, Bristol, and Newcastle-on-Tyne, &c." They recite briefly the origin of the societies, and then describe the objects and characteristics of Methodism. Twenty editions of that tract were issued during Mr. Wesley's lifetime. A copy is supposed to be, and should be, given to each person on first entering the Society.

In 1743, sick-visitors were appointed, the leaders of classes furnishing the names of persons to be visited, and the stewards supplying pecuniary aid when needed.

In June, 1744, the first Conference was held. Mr. Wesley invited six clergymen and five lay-preachers to meet him in London, at the Foundry, and five days were occupied with its deliberations. The first

included preliminary plans and a discussion on Justification; the second, a discussion on Sanctification; the third, on the Church; the fourth, on Discipline; and the fifth was devoted to the appointment of Officers and defining their duties. A full record of their deliberations was preserved, and it shows how completely the whole scheme of Methodist discipline was outlined in their earliest deliberations. It came almost perfect from the first deliberative assembly.

The year 1745 was memorable for the inquiry made in the Conference: Is Episcopal, Presbyterian, or Independent Church government most reasonable? The unrest of Mr. Wesley's mind was deepened by correspondence with the Rev. Westley Hall, who had urged him to renounce the Church of England. At that time, Mr. Wesley believed in apostolical succession and the offering of an outward sacrifice by the priest. These dogmas were soon afterwards given up by him. On his journey to Bristol, in January, 1746, Mr. Wesley read Lord King's "Inquiry into the Constitution, Discipline, Unity, and Worship of the Primitive Church." As the result of the discussion held in the Conference of 1745, Mr. Wesley considered his lay-helpers as deacons and presbyters, and himself as a Scriptural bishop. Lord King's book confirmed those opinions. He took time to consider the whole question; and at the Conference of 1747, in a series of nine questions and answers, he states plainly his acceptance and adoption of a Presbyterian form of Church government. He renounced all his High-Church notions, and his legislation in Conference after that date was based upon the convictions wrought in his mind by Lord King's work. Even apostolical succession had to go. Of that, some years afterwards, he wrote, "I never could see it proved, and I am persuaded I never shall." His preference for the Church of England remained, but his practice was in accordance with the Dissenters in Church polity. Although Mr. Wesley did not for forty years after that period resort to the imposition of hands in ordination, yet the preachers he employed were solemnly set apart to the pastoral office; and the fact of his laying-on of hands shortly before his death was more a matter of form than the conferring of any special grace or qualification. He founded societies or churches all over the land, and he solemnly set apart godly men as their pastors. If there was some inconsistency in Mr. Wesley's

adhesion to the Church of England, and his establishing a separate Church in the land, it was more the result of necessity than design.

In 1746, England was divided into seven circuits, for the better carrying on of the itinerancy and the systematic government of the societies. Circuit stewards were that year first appointed, and quarterly meetings first held. At that meeting all the finances of the circuit were reported, receipts and expenses, and those reports were carried up to the yearly Conference.

The wisdom and forethought of Mr. Wesley were clearly shown in June, 1748, when he opened a large school on the top of Kingswood Hill, Bristol, for the education of the children of his preachers. That school still exists; but a quarter of a century since it was changed in its character to a Reformatory School, and a much larger and more convenient establishment was erected near Bath as the School for Methodist Preachers' Children, which is known as New Kingswood. In 1813, a second school for the same purpose was purchased and opened at Woodhouse Grove, near Leeds, Yorkshire. For some years, the latter has been the juvenile school, and New Kingswood the finishing school, and it has taken high rank among the first-class classical and mathematical schools in England. The two schools were united in 1883, at New Kingswood; and the Woodhouse Grove property is now used as a Methodist Proprietary School for boys. These schools have each a history full of interest, at least to Methodists; but no friendly hand has yet undertaken to be the chronicler of their instructive records. From those schools have gone forth youths who have risen to the highest positions in law, theology, and medicine; while, in commercial life, Methodist preachers' sons take rank with the best in the land. In the years 1880-81, the son of an Irish Methodist preacher was the Lord Mayor of London, he having been also Sheriff of London and Middlesex. Among the senators in the House of Commons are sons of Methodist preachers, who are distinguished as accomplished speakers and able legislators. No less than ten sons of Methodist preachers have been presidents of the Methodist Conference. While much of this distinction is, doubtless, due to natural genius and persevering effort, yet these owe their inception, growth, and success largely to the excellent training obtained in the

schools for preachers' children. A public collection is made through all the societies once in the year for these schools. It was appointed by Mr. Wesley when the first school was opened, and it has been continued ever since. The collection was instituted when the salary of a preacher was not more than £12 a-year.

The early Conferences did not regularly take note of members. The lay-helpers whom Mr. Wesley gathered around him for twenty years were men of courage, zeal, piety, but not of much learning, either theological or general; it was, therefore, a most important primary duty that these preachers should be thoroughly instructed in the elementary doctrines of the Gospel; hence Justification and Sanctification were subjects of much anxious thought and discussion, as by that means the preachers were supplied with material for their preaching.

To assist the preachers in diffusing knowledge, Mr. Wesley wrote and published a dozen tracts; and, in 1747, we read of a tract society for the wider distribution of those helps to the formation of a religious character, and the leading of a useful and holy life. Bibles were very scarce at that time, no Bible Society existed, religious books were few and dear; hence those tracts proved to be great helps to the people, as well as the preachers.

In January, 1750, a union took place between Mr. Whitefield and Mr. Wesley. Doctrinal differences separated them ten years previously; but they began this year by preaching in each other's chapels, and so, records Mr. Wesley, "one more stumbling-block is removed."

In 1751, the first disruption in Methodism took place. John Bennett, who had been a preacher for eight years, separated from Mr. Wesley, charging him with being a pope and preaching popery. During the same year, James Wheatley, another preacher, was expelled by the united voice of both John and Charles Wesley. Both these men for a time created prejudice against the Wesleys, but the societies soon recovered their lost ground.

The Conference of 1752 agreed that the preachers should receive a stipend of £12 per annum to provide themselves with necessaries. Previously, no money salary was given, the stewards supplying the preachers with what they wanted. In the year 1800, the finances had improved sufficiently to allow the preachers £4 each quarter. Ten

years later, that amount was doubled in some circuits, and by the end of the first hundred years (1839), most of the preachers received £1 per week or more, besides a residence rent-free. In 1880, single young preachers received, as a minimum salary, £80 a-year; while some of the leading ministers received a total annual salary which ranged from £250 to £350, from their circuits. Many excellent preachers left Mr. Wesley during his lifetime, because no provision could be made for their wives and children, or for themselves when worn out in the service.

Twelve years having passed, we may examine the results of the new agency. A great religious awakening had manifested itself in nearly all the great centres of population then existing in England. A lay ministry had been established, which was unloosing fetters which had bound the clergy, as in an iron grasp, for fully fifteen centuries; and plain, unlettered men were proclaiming the Gospel to the poor as in apostolic days. Books of hymns, new, fresh, and sparkling with Gospel truth, were being distributed by thousands, at a penny, twopence, and sixpence, and they were furnishing a theology in song, to be sung by the rich and poor alike, supplying delightful occupation both for church and home. The most neglected and ignorant classes of the people were being cared for, and taught most practically their duty to God, their country, and themselves. A new system of Church organisation was being gradually developed, which did not for some time shape itself for any independent action. God may, in His own time, make that new organisation the one vital Church, which shall ultimately draw into itself other living organisations, which are lacking the energy needed for aggressive work. At the end of twelve years, Methodism had all the officers of a Church; it had mapped out England, Wales, and Ireland for systematic ministerial labour, and Scotland was included also in its operations. It had successfully resisted persecutions of the fiercest kind, and triumphed over the most formidable opposition. The chapels and preaching-houses were increasing all over the land; it had a simple, easy, and well-defined theology, which was not fettered by any dogmatisms; it had a liberal polity with a spiritual creed, and was greatly fostered by its use of a popular press. Viewed from any standpoint, the character and progress of Methodism, from its very beginning, was marked by the presence and guiding of a

divine power, which abundantly testified to the vitality and blessedness of its teaching. The poor were raised to a higher social position, the young were rescued from the streets, and at the Foundry were taught sound moral truths; whilst men who had lived scarcely above misery and want, were received to be preachers of the everlasting Gospel, and placed, some of them, in positions of usefulness far above most of the regular clergy.

In August, 1755, Mr. Wesley held the first Covenant Service in London. The form of service used is that written by that eminently holy Puritan, Richard Alleine. The sacrament of the Lord's Supper formed the closing part of the service. It has for many years been the custom to hold the covenant service in the afternoon, or during some part, of the first Sunday in each year, in all societies belonging to English Methodism. It has uniformly been a solemn, interesting, and profitable service.

About that time, 1756, Charles Wesley's feeble health induced him to contract his journeys, and he settled down at Bristol to watch over his growing family. The Rev. John Meriton, a clergyman who had much helped Mr. Wesley all through his work, died in 1753, and these events greatly increased the duties of John Wesley. He felt this so much in 1757, that he prayed earnestly that God would send him help. On that very day, after preaching, and praying for help, a young clergyman, just then ordained, went to the Methodist chapel, and after the service offered himself as an assistant. Such was the introduction of the sainted John Fletcher to Mr. Wesley, concerning which Mr. Wesley wrote: "When my bodily strength failed, and no clergyman in England was able and willing to assist me, he sent me help from the mountains of Switzerland. Where could I have found such another?" So God opened the way for his servant.

The Conference of 1756 ordered a collection to be made yearly in all the societies, which for a century was known as the Yearly Collection, to assist in paying chapel debts, to help poor circuits, to pay the preachers' small salaries, to encourage the opening of new preaching stations, and to pay legal costs when Methodists had to defend their rights against men who interfered with them. The debts on chapels in 1756 were £4000, and in 1812 they reached £100,000. Regulations made during

the last quarter of a century provide against any such accumulations of debt. The Yearly Collection is made in the society classes among members only, and in 1883 it realised only £7643, 14s. The General Fund, as first originated, has changed its name into Contingent Fund, or Home Mission and Contingent Fund. The several objects at first to be assisted by the fund have now each a separate collection for their support.

In 1758, Mr. Wesley wrote and published a small tract giving twelve reasons against separating from the Church of England. That step was not a wise one, its tendency being rather divisive than healing. Himself perceiving diversity of sentiment growing in the Society, he wisely sought to correct the evil by directing special attention to the doctrine of Christian perfection. To ensure its proper consideration, at the Conference, 1760, he instituted a strict examination of the moral, religious, and ministerial character of each of the preachers. A great revival of personal religion followed, concerning which Mr. Wesley wrote: "There began that glorious work of sanctification which had been nearly at a stand for twenty years. It spread first through Yorkshire, afterwards in London, then through most parts of England, next to Dublin and the South and West of Ireland. Wherever the work of sanctification increased, the whole work of God increased in all its branches."

The leading design of Methodism has been from the first to spread Scriptural holiness through the land. The same results might be expected to follow the same exercises. Preach holiness, and the people will strive for it; and when they enjoy it, they will soon seek to bring others into the same happy condition. Two preachers about this period were eminent examples of holy living and earnest working—namely, Thomas Walsh in Ireland and John Fletcher in England. After the lapse of a century, their memories are cherished for the success which God bestowed on their ministry.

The great trouble Mr. Wesley had at this period was the want of proper pastoral oversight for his societies. His prejudice to remain in the Church of England, whilst his daily conduct went to provide material for a Church with a separate organisation, often placed his followers in peril. Mr. Walker, of Truro, a devout churchman, wished

Mr. Wesley to abandon his societies to the care of pious clergymen, where they could be found. Wesley sent a circular to all the Evangelical clergymen he knew, about sixty, proposing their co-operation with him in the spread of true religion. Only three clergymen replied to the application, but twelve met him at his next Conference. They required as the condition of their assistance, that the societies be quite given up to their management, to be incorporated into the membership of their churches. That was a critical juncture, and threatened the extinction of Methodism, if Mr. Wesley yielded the point demanded. Mr. Wesley saw the peril of giving up his followers to a new shepherd, and calmly but firmly declined co-operation on the terms proposed; in that decision all his preachers agreed with him, excepting his brother Charles. The step taken that day was the most decisive for securing the independence and permanence of Methodism.

On several occasions evil-disposed persons had spoken against the moral character of some of the preachers. Mr. Wesley, hearing of these complaints, caused each preacher to be examined at the Conference of 1759, and such examination has been continued at each successive Conference. The punishments for offenders are a rebuke from the President before the whole Conference; being put back on trial; suspension for a year, or expulsion.

In 1762 Thomas Maxfield and George Bell separated from Mr. Wesley, and took with them a large number of members in the London Society. This led Mr. Wesley, in 1763, to devise a plan for the union of all the societies in England, and to establish a Connectional principle which should be a bond of union and mutual help. The duties of assistants and helpers were defined, and the "Twelve Rules of a Helper" written and published. The same year, the preachers received instructions to sell the books issued from the book-room, and the first preacher in each circuit has acted as Connexional bookseller ever since.

The Conference of 1763, observing that some of the preachers were almost worn out and unable to itinerate, it was recommended that a fund be established to relieve the urgent needs of such as were obliged to rest. Each travelling preacher was desired to contribute ten shillings yearly to that fund. For forty years the provision thus made was utterly inadequate for the purpose designed. In 1807, the Conference

reported that the fund was not sufficient to provide the superannuated preachers and their widows with even the necessaries of life. Dr. Adam Clarke drew up a plan that year for increasing the fund. Subsequent Conferences improved upon that plan, and for a time it was known as the Supernumerary Preachers' and Preachers' Widows' Fund, then it was named the Auxiliary Fund, and in 1838 it was further improved and called the New Auxiliary Fund. The preachers contribute liberally to it, and a collection is made once a-year in all the classes, so that the Fund now yields a sum which enables each preacher and widow to receive from it a yearly sum that fully meets all the necessaries of life and places each above want. The Rev. John Rattenbury devoted the last years of his valuable life to perfecting the resources and administration of that Fund. In 1793 the Conference resolved that a preacher unable longer to itinerate should become a supernumerary, and at the end of four years should be superannuated. Rules were afterwards made for permitting some supernumeraries to enter into business, in which case their names were removed from the list of preachers belonging to the Conference. In this way the Rev. Thomas Rankin, who presided over the first Methodist Conference held in America, having entered into business, had to suffer the removal of his name from the Conference roll, and his death was not recorded in the "Minutes" when he died in 1810.

At the Conference of 1765 it was resolved to issue from London one uniform society ticket of membership for all the societies. The first ticket so issued is dated February, 1766. The tickets have been printed and sent out by the book-room ever since. At the same Conference it was recommended that in speaking to and of the members of society the words "brother" and "sister" should be uniformly used, as far as practicable. Those terms are still used by the older preachers and members.

At the Conference of 1766, the question was asked: "Are the Methodists Dissenters?" The answer was: "No. We are irregular. We are not seceders, nor do we bear any resemblance to Dissenters, in the only sense in which our law acknowledges,—viz., Persons who believe it sinful to attend the Church: for we attend it at all opportunities." For more than a century, that interpretation has character-

ised the Methodists; they are neither Churchmen nor Dissenters, they are Methodists; and Mr. Wesley that year enjoined it upon his preachers so to order their services that none should be obliged to miss the Church, but go there at least two Sundays in the month. A century later the same question was often asked, and answered in the same way. The position Methodism is now taking in the religious world is one which is securing for it the character of a Church, independent of all others, complete in its organisation, and fast assuming a dominant place among the Churches of Christendom. By the end of the nineteenth century it will probably be the most numerous body of Protestant Christians in the world.

The Conference of 1767 made a regulation that the same preacher shall not be sent above one year, never above two years, to the same circuit. The time has since been extended to three years. Once, by special request of the Bible Society, Dr. Adam Clarke was appointed a fourth year to the same circuit. Preachers who have ceased to itinerate, that they may occupy official positions in the Connection, are appointed by the Conference to the duties for a period of six years, which may be renewed at the discretion of the Conference. There are about eighty preachers located in office.

The Conference of 1769 was memorable for several things. I. The sending out of Richard Boardman and Joseph Pilmoor to New York as the first regular Methodist preachers in America. II. Mr. Wesley's anxiety that the preachers should be and should keep united in case of his death. To this end he drew up three brief propositions, which were read at three successive Conferences, and signed by each preacher who had not previously signed. They were these: "1. To devote ourselves entirely to God, denying ourselves, taking up our cross daily, steadily aiming at one thing, to save our own souls and those that hear us. 2. To preach the old Methodist doctrines, and no other, as they are expressed in the Minutes of Conference. 3. To observe and enforce the whole Methodist discipline laid down in the Minutes." These were signed by 101 preachers out of 128, the others being young men who did not attend the Conference. Carrying out fully and living by such simple rules was a sure way to the success of the Gospel; Mr. Wesley being himself assured of the efficacy of such directions, they were the

more faithfully enjoined on all his helpers. That bond of union was to them a bulwark against another inroad made at that time against Methodism,—the preaching of Antinomian doctrines, a delusion which Mr. Wesley declared sent more souls to perdition than anything else. As a check to the spread of that evil in his societies, he published in the Minutes of 1769 a series of eight propositions. They occupy only about thirty lines, but they raised a tempest against the Methodists To resist this attack on their liberties, the Hon. and Rev. Walter Shirley, chaplain to Lady Huntingdon, sent a circular to the clergy through the kingdom, inviting them to meet at Bristol at the Conference of 1770, to insist on the formal recantation of those eight propositions. The meeting took place; all the power of Lady Huntingdon and her Calvinistic friends was exercised to try to awe Mr. Wesley into submission—but in vain. The preachers were united, they saw and felt the danger, and acted with firmness, and so saved Methodism. God inspired the Rev. John Fletcher to write his "Checks" to Antinomianism, which saved the preachers from further trouble in the matter; that controversy was settled for ever, so far as Methodism was concerned. Thus was the way opened for Methodism to diffuse itself, and at that Conference it reported 50 circuits, 128 preachers, and nearly 30,000 members.

The Rev. George Whitefield died in America in the September of 1770, and Mr. Wesley preached his funeral sermon in both Mr. Whitefield's Tabernacles in London.

The year 1777 was memorable in Methodism as that in which the foundation of City Road Chapel was laid in London. Eighteen months afterwards, it was sufficiently finished to permit of the opening services, which were conducted by Mr. Wesley himself on Sunday, 1st November, 1778, a day long remembered by the London Methodists; that chapel has ever since been the centre around which all the best interests in Methodism have been more or less concentrated. Methodists from all parts of the world, when they visit London, go there as to their religious home; and in most instances that visit, and the privilege often accorded them of seeing the house in which Mr. Wesley lived, the room in which he died, and the articles therein which belonged to him, afford much greater pleasure and satisfaction than the same persons find in visiting either St. Paul's Cathedral or Westminster Abbey. The

arrangements Mr. Wesley made enabled him to leave that chapel to the care of trustees he appointed, free from debt; and by so doing, he intended that his central London Chapel should be the model to all his societies in their chapel-building operations.

On 1st January, 1778, Mr. Wesley issued the first number of the *Arminian Magazine*, a work in defence of general redemption. It has appeared monthly, without any interruption, for one hundred and six years, and is nearly the oldest serial magazine in England. Its price for thirty-two years was sixpence each issue; in January, 1811, the price was raised to one shilling monthly, and so continued till it had completed a century of years, when the price was again reduced to sixpence. Soon after Mr. Wesley's death, the title was changed to *Methodist Magazine*, and in 1822 the Rev. Jabez Bunting, as editor, changed it again to *Wesleyan Methodist Magazine*, which it still retains. When there were but few magazines in England, its highest circulation was about twenty-six thousand monthly; in 1880 the circulation was only eleven thousand, but it has many rivals. It has been a source of much revenue to Methodism; and an able and powerful defender of its doctrines, agencies, and experience. Its pages are richly stored with valuable theology, history, and instructive and precious biography, including also literature and science, and a portrait of one of the preachers is given in each issue.

The Rev. Dr. Thomas Coke, an ordained clergyman who had joined Mr. Wesley in 1777, was sent by him to preside at the Irish Conference in 1782, and for nearly thirty years he continued to preside over their deliberations, his visits to that country being, on the whole, a great blessing to the people. In 1784 Dr. Coke travelled over England to examine the trust-deeds of the chapels, and to get them settled on the Conference plan.

The last day of February, 1784, was a memorable one in the history of Methodism. To perpetuate the system of Methodism as it had been formulated by the experience of forty-three years, Mr. Wesley had drawn up a Deed of Declaration, which was enrolled in the Court of Chancery, by which one hundred ministers are to form the Annual Conference of Methodism, and the survivors are to fill up all vacancies once a-year. The Deed limits the sittings of the Con-

ference to not less than five, nor more than twenty-one days, and by that Deed Methodism may be perpetuated till the end of time. Several preachers whose names were not included in the first selected hundred took offence and left the connexion, among whom were John Hampson, senior and junior, and Joseph Pilmoor, who went to America and did useful work in the Church. The London Methodists might have made an interesting memorial service out of the occasion by giving lectures and addresses to the young people on the origin and progress of Methodism; but they allowed the time to pass without further notice than by describing the Deed of Declaration in the magazines and newspapers. It is an interesting fact, deserving record here, that the Methodism of America took its present and permanent form as an Episcopal Church, with bishops and elders, in the same year, 1784, only in December; so that in the same year both Churches were, without previous design, established on a permanent basis. The American Methodists are making their centenary observance one of the most important social, historical, and financial efforts in their Church history.

The Conference of 1784 fixed the time for a preacher to remain on trial at four years; it had been less. Soon after the Conference, Mr. Wesley ordained Dr. Coke, and sent him out to America to be joint superintendent, or bishop, over the Methodist brethren in that country with Francis Asbury. He also wrote and sent an important letter to the American societies, dated Bristol, 10th September, 1784, in which he embodied what to him seemed sufficient instructions for the establishment and perpetuation of a Methodist Church; he sent them also an abridged Liturgy for their use.

Sunday schools were systematically commenced by the Methodists about the year 1784. Mr. Wesley himself had conducted a Sunday school in Georgia, America, as early as 1736. In 1769 Hannah Ball, a young Methodist lady, conducted a Sunday school, at High Wycombe, ten years before Mr. Raikes began the work in Gloucester. Mr. Wesley cordially approved of the system, and one of the earliest letters written by Robert Raikes was published in the *Arminian Magazine* for January, 1785. That led the way to the general adoption of Sunday schools by the Methodists. In 1812, the number of

scholars in Methodist Sunday schools was about 60,000; in 1883 the number was 841,951, with 124,390 teachers, in England; and a Union is established for the Connexion, which has had great prosperity.

The action taken by Mr. Wesley in 1784, in ordaining Dr. Coke as superintendent or bishop, to officiate in America, and ordaining Richard Whatcoat and Thomas Vasey to act as elders or deacons, was repeated in the following year, 1785, when he ordained John Pawson, Thomas Hanby, and Joseph Taylor to administer the sacraments in Scotland. In 1786, he ordained Joshua Keighley, Charles Atmore, William Warrener, and William Hammet; the two latter were for mission stations abroad. In 1787, Duncan M'Allum, Alexander Suter, and Jonathan Crowther were ordained by him; and in 1788, John Barber and Joseph Cownley were ordained elders, and Alexander Mather a superintendent. In 1789, Henry Moore and Thomas Rankin were ordained to have special charge of the London, Bath, and Bristol societies, and to administer the sacraments. Mr. Moore's parchment of orders is still preserved. Mr. Rankin, five years previously, had convened and presided over the first Conference of Methodist preachers in America. These acts of ordination were strongly opposed by Charles Wesley, but such a proceeding on the part of John Wesley was justified by the surrounding circumstances of the time. It was one of those pacificatory measures which prevented what threatened to be a separation and loss of members. The Conferences, after Mr. Wesley's death, did not recognise the "orders" thus given as conferring any superiority of position to the preachers thus ordained, excepting that some of them were permitted to administer the Lord's Supper before other preachers could do so. Mr. Moore maintained his supposed rights to the end of his days, but the Conference did not always regard them. The Conference began to ordain preachers by the imposition of hands in 1836, but Mr. Moore was not invited to take part in the ceremonial. The three ministers who first laid hands on the heads of young men received into full connection, in 1836, were Jabez Bunting, president of the Conference; Richard Reece, ex-president; and Robert Newton, secretary of the Conference. Ordination in this way has been continued at every subsequent Conference, the officiating ministers being the president and secretary of Conference, the ex-presidents, some chairmen of districts,

and occasionally the father, if a minister, who has a son to be ordained. The president, in giving a copy of the Bible to each, says, in substance, "Take thou authority to preach the word and administer the sacraments." This takes place not till after four years' satisfactory probation, and a thorough examination in doctrine and discipline.

During the life of Mr. Wesley, preaching by the Methodists was held at five and nine in the morning, five in the afternoon, and eight in the evening, so as not to prevent any from attending service at Church. The Conference of 1786 gave consent to hold Methodist services in church-hours, when the minister was a wicked man, or preached Arian doctrines, or when the churches could not contain half the people, or where the church was three miles distant. In such cases the preacher was directed to read the Psalms, Lessons, and part of the Church Prayers. All this was changed soon after Mr. Wesley's death, and more liberty was given to the preachers.

March 29th, 1788, was a memorable day in the history of Methodism; Charles Wesley, the poet, entered into rest. He had no disease; "the weary wheels of life stood still." He was born December 18th, 1707, consequently was aged eighty years and three months. He wrote fully six thousand five hundred hymns and poetical pieces, but left his widow in such moderate circumstances with her three children, that William Wilberforce, the Christian philanthropist, sent her yearly the sum of £60 as a gratitude-offering for the soul-comfort he had derived from her husband's hymns and sermons, and this was continued till her death, in December, 1822, at the age of ninety-six years. The death of Charles Wesley was more deeply felt by the founder of Methodism than any other event in the history of the Connexion.

At the Conference following the death of his brother, Mr. Wesley took a review of the fifty years that had passed since his conversion, which event he considered to be the real beginning of Methodism. The sum of a long conversation was that the Methodists, in the course of fifty years, had neither premeditatedly nor willingly varied from the Church in one article, either of doctrine or discipline; that out of necessity, not choice, they had slowly varied in some points of discipline, by preaching out-of-doors, using extemporary prayer, employing lay-preachers, forming societies, and holding annual

Conferences. These were all commenced as Providence opened the way. In no way were the Methodists connected with the Church.

The Conference of 1790 was the last presided over by Mr. Wesley. As if premonitory of his death, two committees were appointed, one to manage the mission newly established in the West Indies, and one to superintend the erection of chapels both in England and Ireland. A plan of the order of business in conducting the Conference was drawn up and published in the "Minutes."

The death of John Wesley, March 2nd, 1791, was a blow so heavy when it occurred, that it produced a feeling of awe and submission among the preachers, which prevented the introduction of various reforms, for several years, which had been contemplated and were required. During the whole year the *Arminian Magazine* scarcely named Mr. Wesley; more important duties devolving on both preachers and officers of the Connexion. It was resolved to elect a president from the senior preachers at each Conference, and in other respects to carry on the Connexion on the plan previously observed. England was divided into districts, and chairmen appointed to superintend them. The numbers of districts were: England, nineteen; Scotland, two; Ireland, six. By this plan the best possible arrangement was made for giving to the societies that careful oversight which they had previously received from Mr. Wesley himself. Each district was required to meet its own expenses; and its yearly meeting in May became a kind of local Conference, which has been continued ever since.

A spirit of restlessness soon appeared among some of the societies after Mr. Wesley's death. William Hammet, whom Mr. Wesley had ordained to labour in the West Indies, went to America in 1792 in search of health. He made a division in the society at Charlestown, appealed to the English Conference, and the result was his exclusion from the ministry. In England, one at least of Mr. Wesley's ordained preachers assumed the title of reverend, wore a gown in the pulpit, and administered the Lord's Supper without the consent of the Conference. During the three years following much unrest was manifested in many parts of England, by the people asking to have the Lord's Supper administered by their own preachers, instead of having to go to Church for the purpose, which very few Methodists did.

In 1794 the trustees of some Methodist chapels, especially in Bristol, refused to allow any preacher to officiate in their chapel who had not previously been approved by them for that purpose. The dispute at Bristol ran so high as to threaten a division of the whole Connexion.

In 1795 the dispute with the Bristol trustees, and the question of the preachers administering the Lord's Supper to the societies, had created so much painful unrest that, to save a disruption, a Plan of Pacification was drawn up by nine preachers, which, when approved by the Conference, was submitted to the discontented trustees, and when accepted by them was sent to the societies, and was the means of averting for that year any division. The plan included nine points concerning public worship, and nine points concerning discipline. The concessions consisted mainly in authorising the continuance of sacramental services by the preachers where they had been practised without the consent of the Conference. Preachers and officers who spoke for or against the introduction of the Lord's Supper were to be subject to trial and penalties. That clause was resisted so determinedly by a few preachers, and by very many members, both in public addresses and by the wide distribution of pamphlets, chiefly written by Mr. Alexander Kilham, one of the preachers, that at the Conference of 1796 the first business done was the trial, and finally the expulsion from the ministry, of Mr. Kilham. Those who had the direction of the affairs of the Connexion acted with determination in this matter, but many of the junior preachers and several thousand members considered that decision unjust, unwise, and impolitic.

The year between the expulsion of Mr. Kilham, and the Conference of 1797, was passed by him in visiting the societies in various parts of England, to ascertain their views respecting the action of the Conference in his case. The result was the formation, in the summer of 1797, of a new Methodist Connexion, which included at least three preachers from the old body, and about five thousand members. That was the first division of the Methodist people after Mr. Wesley's death, and in thirty years it was followed by three others, all which might have been averted by the exercise of more Christian forbearance, and the concession of points of discipline deemed "non-essentials," which have in later years been nearly all conceded by the Methodist Conference. The New

Connexion Methodists might be now united with the parent society, from which they need not have been separated. The three preachers who separated themselves from the Conference on that occasion were, William Thom, Stephen Eversfield, and Alexander Cummin, all of whom assisted in forming the New Connexion. The Conference of 1797 issued a pastoral address to the societies, to allay as much as possible the spirit of unrest which so widely prèvailed. For over sixty years a pastoral address has been annually issued by the Conference, commencing with the year 1819.

The wide distribution, and careful study of the Plan of Pacification, was the means of settling the polity of Methodism more permanently than before; and those who cared about the matter were better able to defend themselves, and the religious system to which they had attached themselves. "The regulations of 1797 left the United Societies a Connexion under the government of the Conference as supreme, with district committees in possession of all necessary power for direction in the intervals of Conference;" this controlling power being largely in the hands of laymen. What therefore was wanting in the Deed of Declaration was supplied by the Plan of Pacification, to secure for the Methodist people the requisites for a permanent Church organisation, capable of embracing persons of every land, of extending to all time, and with but little modification, meeting the various conditions which may arise in the future,—a pure and Scriptural Church in doctrine and discipline.

The foreign missions of Methodism were considered and recognised by the Conference of 1798. Those missions were commenced by Dr. Coke in 1786, and were entirely under his direction and management till 1791, when the Conference appointed a committee of nine of the brethren to assist him in examining candidates for foreign service, and also the accounts and letters relating to the missions. The Conference of 1793 appointed the first general collection to be made throughout the Connexion in support of the missions. The second collection was made in 1796, and it has been continued yearly ever since. These missions were under the control and management of Dr. Coke, with the aid, though little more than nominal, of a committee, until the year 1813, when he arranged with the Conference for his

journey to India. The doctor closed his earthly pilgrimage while crossing the Indian Ocean, and in the following year the Foreign Missionary Society was originated at Leeds, since which time it has become one of the most useful and important missionary organisations in the world, with nearly five hundred ministers and one hundred thousand members in society at the Conference of 1880; the voluntary contributions reported at the annual meeting that year in support of the foreign missions being £165,498, while the expenditure of the year was £190,686. The total receipts in 1882 were £169,361, and expenditure £85 in excess of that sum. It would be a very vain attempt to try to estimate the value of this Society in raising the social and moral condition of mankind in so many lands; even in the matter of collecting and giving money for carrying on its agencies abroad, it has been a blessing to tens of thousands of Methodists at home.

At the Conference of 1800, Dr. Coke projected a plan for preaching in the Welsh language to the inhabitants of the principality. Himself a Welshman, he had long felt for the moral degradation of his countrymen, and very earnestly appealed to the Conference on their behalf. The result was, two Welsh preachers, John Hughes and Owen Davies, offered themselves as missionaries to their brethren, and by them Methodism was first introduced into that part of the country. The Calvinistic Methodists were there half-a-century earlier, but Mr. Wesley's adherents only entered on the work in 1800. Two more preachers were sent in 1801; and again, in 1802, John Jones and John Morris joined the little band. The effect of their labours was marvellous. At Carnarvon alone, they began their Society with forty-five members, and at the end of 1802 they had there nine hundred and ninety members. The ardent zeal and untiring labours of the six evangelists secured rapid progress and substantial fruit; Arminian-Methodism took firm hold of the Welsh-speaking population who heard the Word.

A Committee of Privileges was appointed by the Conference of 1803, which then consisted of ten of the principal preachers and laymen in Methodism. Its origin dates from the threatened invasion of England by Bonaparte in 1802, when an Act was passed in Parliament to raise a regular corps of militia. This included some Methodists;

and a clause was introduced to exempt the Methodists from drill on the Sabbath. The Committee of Privileges was at first intended to act in defence of those rights. Its scope and numbers were enlarged in 1811, when the committee was appointed to have the direction of any lawsuit which in any way related to the Methodist Connexion. Circuit collections were ordered to be made to meet the outlay which might occur in consequence of such legal proceedings. In 1853, the committee was established on a broader and more permanent basis, so as to include any legal contingency which might arise. It is now divided into two parts—one for guarding privileges, the other for cases of exigency.

The Conference of 1804 resolved that any itinerant preacher who carried on any trade should, on proof thereof, be excluded from the "Itinerant Plan," and forfeit his connection with the ministry. This regulation excluded from the ministry the Rev. Thomas Rankin, one of the most respected and most prominent of Mr. Wesley's preachers, who, seeing that the allowance made to supernumerary preachers was wholly inadequate to their support, preferred to enter into business and become a coal merchant, rather than impoverish a fund already overtaxed. That act excluded him from the ministry, and at his death he had no record in the "Minutes of Conference." An interesting memoir of him was printed in the *Methodist Magazine* for 1811.

Dr. Coke, whose zeal was unquenchable, who had established very successful missions in the West Indies, Wales, and elsewhere, and whose compassion for the neglected and spiritually destitute would have embraced all mankind, had his sympathies aroused by the moral degradation of many parts of England where religion was almost unknown—places which, from their isolated position, were not likely to be reached by ordinary agencies. At the Conference of 1805, he introduced a plan for establishing Home Missions, and eight districts were marked out and occupied with as many missionaries. William Tranter and Richard Smetham were two of those first appointed. The stations thus occupied were soon centres of usefulness; most of them became new Methodist circuits, and the missionaries were afterwards admitted to the full ministry.

A series of nine new minutes were agreed to by the Conference of

1807, the fifth of which was to the effect, that camp-meetings may be allowable in America, but they are highly improper in England; and the Conference disclaimed all connection with them. Some of the earnest Methodists in Staffordshire were of opinion, that if camp-meetings were good for America, they were equally good for England; accordingly, at Mow Cop, in that county, and other places, camp-meetings were held; and for taking part in them, William Clowes, Hugh Bourne, and other Methodists were deemed unworthy of membership; and on being excluded, several of them united in forming the Primitive Methodist Connexion in 1810, which has since become the most prosperous and most numerous offshoot from the parent society. Its members in 1883 numbered 196,480.

The first Methodist missionary was sent to Africa in the year 1811. Some Methodists had settled in the colony of Sierra Leone about the year 1792. Early in this century a coloured man, named Mingo Jordan, preached to the people, gathered a society, and wrote to Dr. Coke and Dr. Adam Clarke, asking for help. The Conference of 1811 sent out George Warren as the first missionary to that colony.

In the early years of the present century, Methodism had to suffer much from attacks made upon it by the clergy and by the press. *The Quarterly Review*, established in 1809, professing allegiance to Church and State, avowed the most determined hostility to all opponents to either. One of the first attacks it made on religion was in an article attributed to Robert Southey, poet, "On the Evangelical Sects." A greater outrage upon truth can scarcely be conceived, than was the misrepresentation of Methodism contained in that article. It was most mischievous in its effects, and prepared the way for the attempt made by Lord Sidmouth's Bill soon after, "to restrict Methodism by concise laws." God has His own ways for defending His own people, and although the Committee of Privileges at that time were unceasing in their efforts of resistance of that unholy measure, Dr. Adam Clarke, who was then employed by the Government, did more to stop the course of the bill, by private intercourse with Lord Sidmouth, than the public knew. Along with this may be mentioned the zeal, faith, and labours of William Bramwell and others at that period, in carrying on the vital work of Methodism. How it spread

and prospered in those days was a surprise to many. In 1809, the increase of members was over 10,000; in 1810, over 5600; in 1811, over 7600; in 1812, over 9500; so mightily grew the work of God by Methodism.

Some Methodists, having made their way to the colony of Australia, formed a class, and found in one of the penal convicts who had become converted the first Methodist preacher in that vast country. The Conference of 1812 sent out Samuel Leigh, who laid in Australia, broad and deep, the foundations of a great Methodist Church, which numbered in 1883 fully 71,883 members.

In 1813 Dr. Coke started with a small band of missionaries to found the Methodist Church in India; and although it has been of slow growth, its branches are rapidly stretching over the continent of India. The work assumed wider proportions, and found many new fields after the Missionary Society was fully organised in 1813-14; since which time the agents of the society have found their way to nearly every country under heaven; and, aided by the American Methodist Episcopal Church, and the Methodist Episcopal Church South, Methodism is establishing itself in every land.

At the Conference of 1814 two important new departures from previous usage were adopted—namely, that instead of the president and the secretary being elected by the votes only of the Legal Hundred, it was agreed that all preachers of fourteen years' standing should vote, and the persons thus selected be referred to the Legal Hundred for confirmation; also, that instead of filling up the vacancies in the Hundred by seniority, one in every four should be chosen out of the whole body of preachers (by nomination), who had travelled fourteen years. The Rev. Jabez Bunting introduced these alterations to the Conference, and he was the first preacher elected into the Hundred by nomination; and, although only a young preacher, was appointed secretary of Conference that year. It was a new regulation which has worked well in the Connexion, and by means of which some of the most able, though not the most senior, ministers have been placed in the highest positions connected with the Methodist Executive.

In October, 1815, what is now known as the Bible Christian

Society was founded at Lake, near Shebbear, Devonshire, by William O'Bryan. He had been a very zealous Methodist local preacher; had visited many places in that country where the Gospel was not preached, and gathered the people together for religious worship. For doing just what Mr. Wesley had done seventy years before, an injudicious Methodist preacher expelled Mr. O'Bryan from their community; and he, not feeling at liberty to discontinue his evangelistic work, gathered some of his converts into a small society in Devonshire; and in one year their members numbered more than 500. In the year 1883, their membership in England was 24,122; in addition to those in Canada, 7398; and Australia, 4246. Mr. O'Bryan died in America on 8th January, 1868, aged ninety years. Their membership is largely confined to the west of England, where the society originated.

In 1818, what is known as the Children's Fund was instituted. Previously to that date, each preacher having a family was allowed £6 per annum for each child, which sum was found to be inadequate. New arrangements were made in 1818 for raising more money, and for the better management of the fund. The allowance has been £7 for each child for half-a-century; but some circuits, by a special effort, make up the sum to £10.

In 1819, important improvements were made in the system of finance, and the Conference resolved that, in future, a financial district meeting should be held in the early part of the month of September in every district, at which all the preachers and stewards who could were to be present, to make whatever financial arrangements were required for each circuit in the district, for one year prospectively.

Methodism was now an established religious community, a Church in fact, complete in its ecclesiastical arrangements, with Sacraments, administered by its own ministers, by whom the Word of God was faithfully and most successfully preached. The clergy might sneer, the press might scoff, ridicule, and treat it with contempt, but this evidence was indisputable of its vitality; in 1790, it numbered only 61,463 members; in 1820 it had 191,217 members; showing that in thirty years it had more than trebled its members in the Church, whilst its adherents and worshippers were at that time more than half-a-million. This result was not of man, but from God.

One of the most important acts done at any Methodist Conference was the passing of what have since been known as the Liverpool Minutes of 1820—a series of thirty-one resolutions, the design and purpose of which was "the increase of spiritual religion among our societies and congregations, and the extension of the work of God." The reading of these resolutions to the Society at any time since has usually been followed by renewed spiritual activity and success.

The year 1820 was memorable also for the resolution then passed to secure every four years an exchange of delegates between the English and the American Methodist Churches. The first delegate from America was John Emory, who was presented to the Conference at Liverpool, in July, 1820; and who, in his address sketching the progress of Methodism in his own country, said, "The two bodies would yet compass the world, and shake hands at the Pacific." That prophecy has been realised. Emory was a thin spare man of about thirty-five, but his presence and words made a deep impression on the Conference. He was the guest of Dr. Adam Clarke at Millbrook, who was then working hard at his "Commentary." The first delegates from the British Conference to America were Richard Reece and John Hannah, who attended the General Conference held at Baltimore in 1824, where they met Bishops M'Kendree, George, and Roberts, and one hundred and twenty-nine delegates.

The missions to the Shetland Islands were commenced by Dr. Adam Clarke in 1822, who found the chief means for their support for ten years, when he ceased from his labours. In 1883 they numbered more than twelve hundred members.

At the Conference of 1822, Dr. Adam Clarke was chosen president for the third time, an honour at that time unexampled. A special source of joy on that occasion was the increase of 11,882 members reported, being the largest number of additions ever made in one year up to that period. An important debate took place at that Conference on the question of the imposition of hands at the ordination of the young preachers. The Rev. Walter Griffith introduced the subject; it was carefully considered, but the practice was not then adopted, from a needlessly timid feeling of some preachers lest they should disturb the peace of the societies. At the Conference of 1836 the

first experiment was made, and that too without asking the aid of the Rev. Henry Moore, the only preacher then living who had been ordained by Mr. Wesley. Dr. Bunting was the president when this change was introduced. The Rev. Joseph Fowler urged its adoption, because the foreign missionaries were thus ordained. The resolution to ordain in that year, and in future years, was carried in a large Conference with only two dissentients. The president, ex-president, secretary, and two senior ministers were appointed to perform this duty. The custom commenced in 1836 has been observed ever since.

What is known as the Leeds Organ Dispute arose from the introduction of an organ into Brunswick Wesleyan Chapel, in 1828, against the wishes of a large majority of the leaders and other officers of the Society. The result was that more than one thousand members left Methodism, and formed the Society of Wesleyan Protestant Methodists. They existed as a useful, laborious Church, for about eight years, when they united with a much larger secession from the old body.

The Conference of 1833 was one in which mingled feelings of joy and sorrow were almost extreme. The joy arose from the unparalleled increase of 22,898 members, the largest number which has ever been reported. The sorrow, so deep and sincere, arose from the deaths of Dr. Adam Clarke, Rev. Richard Watson, Rev. John James, Rev. Thomas Stanley, and others, foremost men in Methodism.

In the Conference of 1834, the question of commencing an institution for the education and training of young ministers was considered and decided upon. Among the advocates for the measure were Messrs. Reece, Bunting, Newton, Sutcliffe, Gaulter, Scott, Lessey, and one hundred and fifty other preachers. Against the proposal were James Wood, Dr. Samuel Warren, James Bromley, Henry Moore, and about thirty old preachers; one hundred other preachers remained neutral. Dr. Warren took the lead in the opposition; wrote and published a pamphlet against the proposal, which was considered by those friendly to the project to be such a misrepresentation of the facts as to bring the doctor to trial before a special district meeting. Dr. Warren was the superintendent preacher of the Manchester First Circuit. The circuit defended their minister; the special district meeting tried, and suspended him from office as a preacher. An appeal was made to the

Court of Chancery, when the Vice-chancellor, Shadwell, declared against Dr. Warren; in consequence of which, at the Sheffield Conference of 1835, Dr. Warren was expelled from the Conference and the Connexion. Having many friends and followers who sympathised with him, they left the Connexion, and formed the Wesleyan Methodist Association, which ten years afterwards numbered 21,176 members. In 1857, they were united with the Reform Methodists of 1849-50, and formed the body known as the United Methodist Free Churches.

The resolution of the Conference of 1834 to found a Theological Institution was carried into effect by the Conference of 1835-36. A committee was formed to complete the proposed scheme. An old Congregational building, known as the Hoxton Academy, was rented, and used with advantage for several years. In 1839, Abney House, in Stoke Newington, long the residence of Sir Thomas Abney and of Dr. Isaac Watts, was taken as a branch establishment; and both were used to their fullest capacity until the year 1841-42, when the handsome college at Richmond was completed; and about the same time the commodious institution of Didsbury, near Manchester, was also ready for occupation, when both were tenanted by the removal of the students from the two London buildings. Since then another college for the same purpose has been built at Headingly, near Leeds, and occupied fully; and a fourth college at Handsworth, near Birmingham, was opened in 1881.

The centenary of the founding of Methodism was celebrated in all parts of the world during the year 1839. The Conference of 1837 appointed a committee of ministers and laymen to prepare a report of the best way of observing the occasion. The report was presented to and accepted by the Conference of 1838, and a great Connexional representative meeting was gathered in Oldham Street Chapel, Manchester, 7th November, 1838, comprising two hundred and fifty preachers and laymen; it was the most imposing assembly of Methodists which had ever been held. Its deliberations were continued for three days. To commemorate its proceedings, a large picture was painted, engraved, and published by Mr. Agnew, in which were included one hundred and four portraits. It is generally known as "The Centenary Picture." Thomas Jackson presided. It surpassed

all previous meetings for Christian feeling and pious beneficence. A Thanksgiving Fund was recommended as an acknowledgment for the great mercies of the past, and £80,000 was at first fixed upon as the limit expected from it. No less than £10,000 was promised at the meeting held in the City Road Chapel, London. Ireland generously promised £14,500 ; and by the opening of the centenary year the promises had reached £102,000 ; by March they were £150,000 ; and by the time the celebration was to be observed throughout the Connexion—namely, Friday, 25th October—the promises had reached £200,000. Before the fund was closed, it amounted to £216,000. The objects to be benefited by the fund were the erection of two Theological Institutions ; the purchase of a Centenary Hall and Mission-house in London ; the relief of distressed chapels ; the better support of worn-out preachers and their widows ; the building of a Centenary Chapel in Dublin ; and to make provision for promoting day-school education. The Centenary Conference, 1839, reported an increase of membership of over 16,000, and 118 candidates for the ministry. The year after the death of Mr. Wesley—*i.e.*, in 1792, the Methodist family numbered 550 itinerant preachers and 140,000 members in Great Britain and America : in 1839 these figures were raised to 5200 itinerant preachers and 1,171,000 members in society. In 1883, the total number of itinerant ministers throughout the Methodist world was 33,083 ; the total of ministers and members, 5,058,292. This record may be very appropriately closed with the memorable words of the dying Wesley—"What hath God wrought!"

In 1841, the centenary grant of £2500 for educational purposes was made available for the founding of a training institution for elementary teachers, and the establishment of primary schools throughout the Connexion. The necessary funds for developing the work came in slowly. The Normal Training Institution and Practising Schools in Westminster were opened in 1848. In 1857 there were 434 day-schools connected with Methodism, in which 52,630 scholars were taught. Ten years later, there were 640 schools and 100,000 scholars. In 1883 there existed 854 schools and no less than 181,598 scholars. An additional training institution has also been established at Shortlands, Battersea, for females. The first principal of the West-

minster institution was the Rev. John Scott, who died in 1868; and the present principal is the Rev. Dr. James Harrison Rigg. The principal at Shortlands is the Rev. George Osborn Bate.

The disruption which took place at the Manchester Conference of 1849 was the most sad and painful event that ever occurred in Methodism. A growing feeling of discontent had for some years been manifested by some of the preachers at what was considered by them a policy of dictation by some of the senior preachers, more especially by Dr. Bunting; and certain "Fly-Sheets" were printed and circulated throughout the Connexion, in which the causes of complaint and dissatisfaction were embodied The fly-sheets were anonymous. About the same time there was published a volume entitled "Centenary Sketches of One Hundred of the Prominent Ministers of the Connexion." That also was anonymous. The Conference of 1849 resolved to ascertain, by a system of rigid questioning, who among the preachers were the authors of the said publications. Several of the preachers refused to answer the question, "Are you the author of the 'Fly-Sheets?'" Suspicion was mainly fixed on the Rev. James Everett, one of the senior preachers. He most resolutely declined to answer to the question of authorship of the delinquent publications, and he was excluded from the Connexion for contumacy. The Rev. Samuel Dunn, another minister of about thirty years' standing, had commenced in 1849 a new monthly magazine, with the title of *The Wesley Banner*. He had not complied with an obsolete Methodist Conference rule, which requires every preacher to publish works only through the Book-room. The question of the authorship of the fly-sheets was put to him, and also the question whether he would discontinue *The Wesley Banner*. For refusing to answer those questions he also was excluded from the Connexion. The Rev. William Griffith, jun., also refused to answer the question of authorship of the fly-sheets, and he also declined to promise that he would not report the proceedings of the Conference to a Wesleyan newspaper. For those offences he also was excluded. To those three ministers were afterwards added the Rev. James Bromley, the Rev. Thomas Rowland, and others. One result of those proceedings was, that within two or three years, more than 120,000 members of Society had left the Connexion, and had

formed a new one under the designation of Wesleyan Reformers. During the same time, the funds of the Connexion had suffered so severely that the arrears three or four years afterwards amounted to about £100,000. The total membership of English Methodism in 1850 was reported at 358,277. It was not until twenty-five years afterwards that the membership again reached those figures, so that it required the labours of over one thousand paid ministers to recover the ground lost by those expulsions. Such a painful and costly experiment, as was that of the Conference of 1849, is not likely to be ever again repeated. The Wesleyan Reformers had a separate existence until the year 1857, when they united with those who separated in the Warrenite division of 1835, and formed together the United Methodist Free Churches, having a membership in 1883 of 84,152. A few Societies, which refused to amalgamate, form the Wesleyan Reform Union, with a membership of 8613. Thousands of members were altogether lost to Methodism and to the Christian Church in consequence of that disruption. The Reformers have uniformly laid the chief blame of the expulsions to the Rev. Dr. Jabez Bunting; but other prominent preachers were equally concerned in the business. One of the difficulties arising from the disruption was owing to so many trustees of chapels being severed from the Society; and, further, the withdrawal of so large a sum of money from Connexional objects. To meet that emergency, the Conference of 1854 inaugurated what is now known as the Connexional Relief and Extension Fund. One hundred thousand pounds was promised to that fund in 1854, and the money was to be appropriated as loans to trustees of such chapels as were in difficulties, as gifts and loans to improve Church property, and to aid in the erection of new Methodist churches. The fund is now known by the title of Extension of Methodism in Great Britain; and at the Conference of 1883 the committee reported having assisted 649 chapels, either in their erection or enlargement.

At the Conference of 1854, the Wesleyan Chapel Fund was established on a new and separate basis. The committee has to consider and determine all matters relating to the trust-property of Methodism, and it carries out as far as possible the recommendations of the Extension Fund Committee.

An important change in the management of the great sectional departments of Methodism was inaugurated when affiliated Conferences were introduced. The first action was taken in 1847, when the two sections of the Methodist family in Canada were united and made into an independent Conference, but affiliated with the British Conference. The New Connexion Methodists, and also the Bible Christians of Canada, have since joined with them so as to make one united family in Canada. This was finally accomplished in the summer of 1884. The French Methodist Church was made into an independent ecclesiastical organisation in 1852, but affiliated to the British Conference. Australia, including New Zealand, Polynesia, and the Islands of the Pacific, was in 1854 created an independent Conference, but affiliated to the British Conference. The provinces of Eastern British North America were created into a separate Conference in 1854, but affiliated to the British Conference.

In 1861, the Metropolitan Chapel Building Fund was inaugurated for the purpose of securing the erection of fifty new Methodist churches in and near London within the period of twenty years. Sir Francis Lycett gave the princely sum of £50,000 to commence the fund, with the proviso that a similar amount should be contributed throughout the Connexion for the same object. The full number of fifty were not erected within the period specified, but the good work was so far advanced that Sir Francis generously gave a further £5000, shortly before his sudden death, 29th October, 1880, for securing the erection of five more chapels. One condition was that at least one thousand sittings were to be provided in each chapel. At the end of the year 1883, there were at least sixty-four Methodist churches capable of seating over one thousand persons each, in the metropolis.

During the progress of this movement in London, it was found that there are many localities in which chapels of smaller dimensions are urgently required; and to meet such cases, a new movement was inaugurated in November, 1883, by Sir William M'Arthur, M.P., who, at a private meeting of friends at his residence, commenced another special Chapel Building Fund, to be collected during the ensuing five years. To this fund, Sir William promised the noble gift of £10,000;

his brother, Mr. Alexander M'Arthur, promised £5000, and with the other promises made that evening, no less than £25,000 was recorded towards the £50,000 named as the sum requisite to carry out the proposed new scheme.

The Conference of 1873 received under its fostering care an institution called the Children's Home and Orphanage, which was originated in Lambeth in 1869, by the Rev. Thomas Bowman Stephenson, A.B., and which has steadily developed into a large establishment for the education and training of destitute children. Its origin and history abound in interesting incidents. Having been originated by a Wesleyan minister, and supported mainly by the benevolence of the Methodist people, it began to be considered as a great Methodist orphanage, or home for the destitute. As an independent organisation, it has expanded into five separate establishments, which had in them, at the end of 1883, the following number of inmates:—The London Central Home at Bethnal Green, 258; the Edgeworth Farm School, Lancashire, 153; the Training School at Milton, Gravesend, 172; the Home at Ramsey, Isle of Man, 38; the Home at Hamilton, in Canada, 8; thither the children are sent when trained, and are placed in service to get a good start in life. Through the very generous gift of £9000 by Mr. Jevons, a sixth branch was opened at New Oscott, near Birmingham, for orphans, and, with the consent of the Queen, is named The Princess Alice Orphanage. Since the institution was commenced, about 1500 children have been received and rescued, and the total number under training in December, 1883, was 631. The Conference of 1873 recognised the institution as belonging to Methodism; its report is presented at each Conference, and an abstract printed in the Minutes. Its management is vested by the Conference in its founder, with an executive committee; and the Rev. Thomas Bowman Stephenson, LL.D., has lived to witness the most gratifying success of his benevolent scheme.

At the Conference of 1873, the Committee for the Promotion of Higher Education in Methodism was instructed to take the requisite steps for founding a college for Methodist children in the university town of Cambridge. The institution has been successfully founded, under the management of the Rev. W. F. Moulton, D.D., with the

modest designation at present of the Leys School. It reported 100 pupils at the school in 1883, and its prosperity was most satisfactory.

Arrangements were made by the Conference of 1875 for the founding of a Wesleyan Methodist Sunday-school Union. The varied advantages of such an institution were recognised by the Conference; and during the year following, the Union was formed, which established itself in 1876 in new premises in Ludgate Circus, London. At the Conference of 1880, the committee reported 6376 Methodist Sunday schools in the Union—an increase of fifteen per cent. in ten years; 119,911 officers and teachers—twelve per cent. increase; and 787,143 scholars—an increase of twenty-four per cent. in ten years. The Conference of 1883 reported the following totals: officers and teachers, 124,390; Sunday scholars, 841,951; total, 966,341. The Rev. Charles H. Kelley is the clerical secretary of the Union, and its chief advocate and representative; Mr. W. Binns, manager.

The most important historical event of the present generation of Methodists is the introduction of lay representation into the Conference. That was first determined upon by the Conference of 1877, and the whole scheme of the new arrangement occupies nineteen pages of the Minutes of that year. The Conference cannot legally extend beyond twenty-one days yearly. The first fourteen days are devoted to the Ministerial Conference; and, the six week-days following, the Conference consists of 240 ministers and 240 laymen. All the members of the Legal Hundred are entitled to be present, and also secretaries of departments in Methodism, some chairmen of districts, and others. The lay representatives are to be all members of Society and members of a circuit quarterly meeting. The conditions are specified with great care and minuteness. Fifteen subjects are reserved for the consideration of the Ministerial Conference only, and sixteen other subjects, chiefly of a financial character, are reserved for the consideration and determination of the Mixed Conference. The order and form of business are agreed upon, which embraces all the subjects likely to come under their consideration. The Conference of 1878 was the first at which the new plan was adopted. The harmony was complete. The experiment of ministers and laymen working together was a success of the highest character. As a mark of gratitude to God for the success of the first

Representative Conference, four months after its close, the Thanksgiving Fund was inaugurated, which has since reached in promises £303,000; the payments to July, 1883, were £291,421. The Conferences of all the offshoots of Methodism have from their origin consisted of ministers and laymen. The parent Society was the last to try the experiment, and some persons were surprised that it was not a failure. This action on the part of the Wesleyan Conference was the first really aggressive step towards the union of universal Methodism. The marked success of this special financial effort has induced three others of the Methodist bodies—the New Connexion, the Free Churches, and the Bible Christians—to try the same experiment, and by a special fund to reduce their Connexional indebtedness.

One of the most memorable events in English, as well as in universal Methodism, was the holding in September, 1881, of an Œcumenical Methodist Conference, at City Road Chapel, London, which was continued from the 7th to the 20th of that month. A considerable portion of the north side of that chapel, including the whole of the Morning Chapel, had been consumed by a calamitous fire at the end of the year 1880; but the energy, zeal, and perseverance of the preachers and officers of that circuit secured the entire restoration and, in some parts, the improvement of the interior in time for that important assembly. Representatives were there from the Wesleyan Conference, the New Connexion, Bible Christians, the Primitive Methodists, the Methodist Free Churches, and two smaller bodies; also from the Conferences in Ireland, France, and Australia. From the Western World, representatives came from the Methodist Episcopal Church, the Methodist Episcopal Church South, from the African M. E. Church, from the M. E. Church Zion, the Coloured M. E. Church, the Methodist Protestant Church, and seven small bodies; from the Methodist Church of Canada, and three smaller bodies in Canada. Such a large gathering of Methodists, all important and official men, 390 in number, representing Methodism the world over, was a surprise to Englishmen; and to none was the gathering a greater surprise than to the press both of England and America. Something like twenty-four millions of adherents to Methodism were there represented; and during the deliberations of the Conference, the

question was often asked by the press and in family circles, How has this mighty host been gathered and so efficiently organised? From the statistics presented to the Conference, the fact was demonstrated, that Methodism had grown and expanded until it had become one of the most important and numerous bodies of Protestant Christians in the world. The entire proceedings of the Conference were published in a volume of 648 octavo pages, as a permanent record of the position of Methodism after an existence of one hundred and forty years.

In giving a complete sketch of the history of Methodism, it would be very desirable to supply details respecting the doctrines, the constitution and polity, the institutions, statistics, and literature of Methodism. These points open up so wide a field of observation, that they cannot be here dwelt upon; nor, indeed, is it needful, seeing that there are various works which furnish all the information required on these subjects, and at a cost which makes it easy for any one desiring these details to obtain them. It would be easy to enumerate the titles of a dozen works which have been published during the present century, in which reliable information will be found on these several branches of minor topics.

The following summary will show the extent of Methodism at the end of the year 1883 :—

	MINISTERS.	MEMBERS.
Wesleyan Methodists in Great Britain,	1820	441,484
In Ireland,	239	25,052
On Foreign Missions,	392	76,046
The French Conference,	31	2,024
South African Conference,	177	29,832
Australian Conference,	468	71,417
Methodist Church in Canada,	1370	143,014
Methodist New Connexion,	192	29,299
Bible Christians,	236	28,368
Primitive Methodists,	1147	196,480
United Methodist Churches,	431	84,152
Reform Union and Independent Methodists,	19	14,033
Methodist Episcopal Church, America,	12,815	1,740,205
Methodist Episcopal Church South, America,	4045	883,108
Eleven Smaller Bodies in America,	9393	1,260,898

Total Ministers and Members, 5,091,490.

Total Methodist Adherents throughout the World, 25,000,000

The Methodist New Connexion.

THIS branch of the Methodist community originated in 1797, and therefore it has ceased to be New; the designation is a misnomer. It is too late now to change it. The best way of disposing of the anomaly is for the entire body of them to return to the Wesleyan Methodist Conference, out of which they originally came nearly ninety years ago. There is now no satisfactory reason for their separate existence, and many are anxiously desiring to see the Old and the New Connexion speedily united in one Conference. This question of the union of the various Methodist bodies has been often considered and discussed, both by tongue and pen, during the past twenty years, and the question has been again undergoing thoughtful consideration in a series of articles, appearing during the year 1884, in the *Primitive Methodist Quarterly Review*. The organic union of the Old and New Connexion would be a wise first step towards the more extended unification of the several sections of the great Methodist family.

The opinion has been held, and is still prevalent in some localities, that the Methodist New Connexion had its origin in personal sympathy with Alexander Kilham. Such is not the fact. Most of those who joined the body at its origin were influenced by the publications and public addresses of Mr. Kilham, but the Connexion as such originated in principle, not in sympathy. The Methodist New Connexion

was originated by a contest for the establishment of the following important and Scriptural principles :—

1. The right of the people to hold their public religious worship at such hours as were most convenient, without their being restricted to the mere intervals of the hours appointed for service in the Established Church.

2. The right of the people to receive the ordinances of Baptism and the Lord's Supper from the hands of their own ministers and in their own places of worship.

3. The right of the people to a representation in the district meetings and in the Annual Conference, and thereby to participate in the government of the community and in the appropriation of its funds.

4. The right of the Church to have a voice, through its local business meetings, in the reception and expulsion of members, the choice of local officers, and in the calling-out of candidates for the ministry.

Not any of these privileges were originally enjoyed in the parent body; they were for years zealously contended for by the fathers and founders of the New Connexion; and when they could not be fully obtained, conscience compelled those men to secede from the parent community and originate a distinct denomination in which such Scriptural privileges could be freely enjoyed.

The power of Mr. Wesley was absolute, but it fell into his hands unsought and undesired. It was exercised by him with affection, and solely for the best interests of his societies; and retained from the same motive. He was the *father* of the community, and was necessitated for a time to be its sole director and governor; but, however proper it was for him to exercise that power during the infancy of the Connexion, yet, when surrounded by churches which had grown to maturity, and assisted by ministers and laymen of acknowledged wisdom, integrity, and piety, whose existence and happiness, like his own, were bound up with the prosperity of Methodism, it would have been more conformable to the example of the apostles, and the dictates of sound reason, to have gradually relaxed his hold of the reins, and admitted others to a participation of the same; and finally to have framed a liberal constitution defining the prerogatives of the ministry and the privileges of the people, securing both by suitable regulations and wholesome laws. Mr. Wesley's mind was well qualified for this, but he did it not. He retained absolute power until death; and, instead of framing for the community a liberal constitution, he transferred by legal settlement his own power to the preachers, and made

that *law* which before was only *custom*, and custom arising from the peculiar relation in which he stood. He made those his successors in absolute power who could not possibly be his successors in paternal relation and influence. That exercise of power was the subject of many remarks and adverse criticism. Just fifty years after the origin of Methodism, Mr. Wesley had to defend his conduct in this matter, which he did in these words:—

"Some of our helpers say, 'This is shackling free-born Englishmen;' and they demand a free Conference,—that is, a meeting of all the preachers, wherein all things shall be determined by most votes. I answer, It is possible after my death something of this kind may take place, but not while I live. To me the preachers have engaged themselves to submit, to serve me as sons in the Gospel; but they are not thus engaged to any man or number of men besides. To me the people in general will submit, but they will not thus submit to any other."

When Mr. Wesley died, in 1791, only two years after he had written and published the above observations, there were 380 preachers in his Society, some with active, others passive dispositions. Among the former were those who were of opinion that, being the regularly appointed ministers of their congregations, they ought to exercise all the functions which belong to the pastoral office; but to be deprived of the privilege of administering the sacraments was felt by several of the preachers to be a great hardship, while the laymen, many of them, considered they had a just right to representation in the properly-constituted church courts.

Mr. Alexander Kilham, one of the preachers who had been specially privileged in his ministerial career with direct personal intercourse with Mr. Wesley, and his particular friends, was one of the most able and courageous advocates of what was considered the full rights and liberties of both preachers and people. In 1792 he published an address to the Newcastle Society, to whom he was then ministering, advocating liberal views. His address met with favour from Dr. Coke, Messrs. Bradburn, Pawson, Moore, Taylor, Crowther, Bramwell, and others. The Church party among the preachers resisted strongly, and the controversy spread and intensified. Mr. Kilham, impressed with the conviction that permanent peace would never be established in the body until such a constitution was adopted as secured to the people New Testament rights and privileges, felt it a duty to make another

effort for the attainment of this important object. Under this impression he wrote a pamphlet entitled "The Progress of Liberty." In this work he adverted to the course of Mr. Wesley in the progress of Methodism, showing that he had acted from time to time as altered circumstances required; he glanced at the alterations which had been effected since Mr. Wesley's death, and analysed "The Articles of Pacification," pointing out their defects, &c. In the second part of this work he lays down the "Outlines of a Constitution," which he humbly proposes to the consideration of "The People called Methodists." This outline embraces the following particulars:—

First, That instead of the preachers having the sole power to admit and expel members, these acts should be done with consent of the people.

Second, That the members should have a voice in choosing their own leaders.

Third, That local preachers, instead of being appointed by the circuit preacher, should be examined and approved by the leaders' and quarterly meetings; with which meetings also should rest the power of receiving and dismissing them.

Fourth, That as it was impossible to allow the people to choose their own ministers, on account of the itinerant plan, yet the quarterly meetings should have a voice in recommending preachers to travel.

Fifth, That lay delegates appointed by the quarterly meetings should attend the district meetings.

And, lastly, he proposes, "with submission to the preachers and the Connexion at large, to appoint one or two lay delegates from every district meeting to attend the Conference."

Such were the propositions of Mr. Kilham; and they were the principles adopted as elements of the constitution of the New Connexion at its origin, and they remain its essential and distinguishing features at the present day. Many of them have since been substantially adopted in the other Methodist bodies. Nevertheless, for publishing the pamphlet advocating these principles of freedom, Mr. Kilham was tried and expelled from the ministry at the ensuing Conference (1796). Being left without a circuit, Mr. Kilham published a detailed account of his trial and expulsion, which sold extensively and was read eagerly. It created a strong feeling of sympathy towards the expelled, who was welcomed in many circuits to preach to and address the people. Several large societies expressed their adhesion to the principles Mr. Kilham advocated, and in May, 1797, a chapel was purchased in Leeds, where he gathered large congregations and preached to them.

The Methodist Conference of 1797 was occupied during its session with the altered circumstances arising from their refusal of the liberties which had been asked by deputations from the people. A Plan of Pacification was drawn up and published by the Conference, which was one of the most important proceedings connected with the history of Methodism. As, however, that plan did not concede all that the people desired, three of the preachers resigned — William Thom, Stephen Eversfield, and Alexander Cummins—and they united with Mr. Kilham. These brethren, with a number of delegates from the people, met together in the Ebenezer Chapel, Leeds, on 9th August, 1797, when Mr. Thom was elected president and Mr. Kilham secretary; and the basis of a constitution was adopted in conformity with the principles which had been publicly advocated. The full development and formal statement of these principles were reserved until the ensuing Conference. The most important places in which friends declared for the New Itinerancy were Alnwick, Ashton, Bolton, Chester, Hanley, Leeds, Liverpool, Macclesfield, Manchester, Nottingham, Newcastle, and Stockport, which became the nuclei of distinct circuits, consisting altogether of over 5030 members.

The Methodist New Connexion has a creed; the doctrines it teaches are Arminian, purely Methodistic. No written creed was considered necessary at the time the Connexion was commenced, its founders being all Methodists who held by Mr. Wesley's writings; they retained his hymn-book, and avowed their unabated attachment to the doctrines he taught. False reports on this head having been circulated in the early years, the Conference of 1800 made a specific declaration of their doctrines, which were briefly summed up under the following heads—namely, first, the fall of man; second, redemption by the death of Christ; third, justification by faith; fourth, the complete sanctification of believers; fifth, perseverance in the Divine life, or the necessity of continuing in faith and good works to the end, in order to final salvation.

The Conference of 1816 reviewed the whole question of doctrines, and embodied them in twelve articles or propositions, with Scripture references to each. These are the same as those held by the parent Society.

Respecting their Church organisation and polity, the founders of the Methodist New Connexion renounced all connection with the Established Church, and, as avowed Dissenters, added the administration of the ordinances of Baptism and the Lord's Supper to the regular duties of the ministry. They laid down as fundamental this principle: "That the Church itself is entitled, either collectively in the persons of its members, or representatively by persons chosen out of and by itself, to a voice and influence in all the acts of legislation and government." That principle is embodied in the entire system of government of the Connexion. This will be seen from the following statement of the constitution and functions of the official meetings, briefly summed up under five heads.

1. *Conference.*—This is held annually, and is composed of an equal number of preachers and laymen, each circuit sending one of its preachers and one of its lay members. When only one representative is sent, the circuit selects a preacher and layman in alternate years. Should any circuit be unable to send a representative, a letter accompanied by the required documents, details, and collections is sufficient. The treasurer of the Connexion; the corresponding member of the annual committee; the steward and treasurer of the Book-room; the general secretary of the missions; the superintendent of the Irish Mission; a deputed minister or layman, alternately, from the Irish Societies; and the Guardians of the Connexion, under the Deed executed in 1846, are, by virtue of office, members of Conference, without interfering in any way with the privilege of the circuits in which such individuals may reside. The business of Conference is to make laws for the government of the Connexion; to decide impartially on charges affecting the character of preachers or other officers, and on appeals referred to it by the quarterly meetings; to disburse the various funds of the Connexion; to station the preachers for the year ensuing; to investigate the condition of each circuit; to adjust differences, and to promote, by friendly co-operation and advice, harmony and love throughout the community; and to devise and put into operation means for the more extensive spread of the Gospel both at home and abroad. Its sittings are open to members of the Connexion, subject to the judgment of the president, and the proceedings are reported by the press.

In addition to the above, a committee of seven persons is chosen at each Conference, by ballot, to transact the business of the Connexion between one Conference and another; four of the members are preachers and three are laymen, one year, and *vice versâ* the following year. It is the duty of this committee to see that the resolutions of Conference are carried into effect; to give advice in all matters of dispute and difficulty, and to make provision for such circuits as may through death, new openings, or other causes, need supplies during the ecclesiastical year. A report of its proceedings is prepared by the corresponding member, and annually presented to Conference.

2. *District Meetings.*—These meetings are composed of all the circuit preachers in the district, with an equal number of laymen (including the representatives to the last Conference), who are elected by the respective quarterly meetings. These meetings are designed to form and carry out plans for the revival of the work of God in the district; to investigate the condition of the societies, chapels, and Sabbath schools, and to prepare correct returns of the number of members, probationers, Sabbath-school teachers and scholars, &c., for the use of Conference; to ascertain the amount raised in each circuit for the different Connexional funds; to investigate all claims on the Yearly Collection and Chapel Fund; to receive applications for the division of circuits; to examine candidates for the ministry; to lay before the district any resolution of the Conference affecting the circuits, and to ascertain whether they have been carried into full effect. These meetings are designed and calculated to shorten the duration of Conference, to strengthen the executive, to secure more correct information on points of local interest than can be done at a greater distance, and to afford a legitimate channel through which many evils may be altogether prevented or speedily rectified.

3. *Quarterly Meetings.*—These are held in each circuit, and are composed of the circuit preachers, the circuit stewards, the secretary of the local preachers, and representatives of the people chosen from the local preachers, leaders, trustees (being members), and other experienced persons from the different societies. Each society sends one or more representatives according to the number of its members. Any member of Society has free admission to the quarterly meetings, with

liberty to give his opinion, but without the power to vote. It is the business of the quarterly meeting to pay the preachers' salaries; to determine the amount that each society is to contribute for the support of the ministry; to make by-laws for its own regulation and for the management of the circuit, providing they do not contravene the rules of the Connexion; to appoint persons to make the preachers' plans for the circuit; to recommend local preachers to be taken into the regular ministry; to determine respecting the qualifications of candidates for the *local* ministry, and to examine and decide upon the affairs, both temporal and spiritual, of the circuit generally.

4. *Leaders' Meetings.*—These consist of leaders, society stewards, one or more of the circuit preachers, a male representative for each of the female and circuit preachers' classes, and a representative from the trustees of the chapel, provided such representative be a member of Society. Leaders' meetings are held weekly, or once a fortnight, and regulate the affairs of each society and place of worship. It is the province of these meetings to inspect the class-books, and to receive the weekly or other payments; to inquire after the sick or absent members, that they may be visited; to determine on notices for the pulpit; to fix the hours for public worship, and appoint the times for making the collections for its support; to recommend persons to act as exhorters or local preachers; to judge and decide upon the fitness of candidates for Church membership; to ascertain whether any members are walking disorderly; and prayerfully to devise plans for the advancement of the work of God, and for the general improvement of the Society.

5. *Local Preachers' Meetings.*—These are held previously to the circuit quarterly meetings, and are composed of the circuit and local preachers. Their business is, in addition to mutual counsel and encouragement, to consider the recommendations given by the leaders' meetings of persons to be employed as local preachers or exhorters; make suitable inquiries respecting probationers, and any alleged irregularities in the conduct or preaching of any of the brethren; ascertain if any alterations are required in the places or times of preaching, and report thereon to the quarterly meeting through the medium of their secretary.

The religious, social, and society meetings of the New Connexion are conducted in the same manner as the like meetings of the Wesleyan body, the parent Society.

History.

The historical incidents in the Methodist New Connexion are comparatively few, and they relate chiefly to the personal history of the preachers and the steady spread of the movement. At the first Conference the number of adherents was 5037. Surrounded by difficulties of more than ordinary urgency and gravity, the Society made very slow progress, not so much from want of sympathy on the part of the people as from want of funds and agents to commence new circuits. The new itinerancy commenced with seven circuits and seven preachers. In 1798 seven other preachers entered the ministry—Messrs. W. Haslam, W. Styan, John Revil, Charles Donald, W. Driver, G. Wall, and John M'Clure. That fact inspired cheerful hopes of progress; but in five years only 243 additions were made to the membership. A monthly magazine was commenced in 1798, which has been continued ever since. The first and second Conferences were presided over by Mr. William Thom, the secretary being Mr. Kilham. The Conference of 1799 was presided over by John Grundell, the secretary being Mr. Robert Hall, of Nottingham, a holy man, and a generous supporter of the cause. In December of the previous year the first heavy blow and discouragement came by the unexpected death of Mr. Kilham; many were disheartened, and some among Mr. Wesley's followers were glad, they viewing the occurrence as a judgment upon him personally. All the surrounding circumstances, calmly considered apart from prejudice, show that Mr. Kilham's death was more the result of earnest overwork and exposure in bad weather. Viewed from any human standpoint, the premature death of that able minister was much to be regretted, and the good work for which he lived and laboured was considerably retarded by the occurrence. Exactly two months after Mr. Kilham's death, the Connexion suffered another serious loss by the death of their very liberal and zealous layman, Mr. William Smith, of Hanley, who expired peacefully, 20th February, 1799. He had been brought up in Mr. Wesley's Society, but his sympathies were with Mr. Kilham,

whom he visited at Nottingham, 19th December, 1798. He was born at Walsall, Staffordshire, in December, 1763, was religiously brought up; frequently preached as occasion offered; attended the first Conference of the New Connexion; opened his house at Hanley for preaching, and soon afterwards had a chapel erected there, which became the central home of one of the largest and most prosperous societies in the Connexion.

The Conference of 1799 recognised a society in Ireland, and the Rev. John M'Clure commenced a cause at Lisburn. The same year the few preachers then associated agreed to contribute ten shillings and sixpence yearly to found a fund for the support of aged ministers.

The Conference of 1803 commenced what is known as the Paternal Fund. It is sustained by public collections in the chapels and private subscriptions. Allowances are made from it towards the support of the children of the preachers in their early years. The Beneficent Fund was originated at the same Conference by Mr. Samuel Higginbottom, of Manchester, who gave fifty pounds as a benefaction, and became the first treasurer of the fund. The resources are obtained from public collections and subscriptions, and its objects are the relief of aged and infirm ministers and their widows. In 1883, the Paternal Fund produced £2966; the Beneficent Fund, £3257.

The year 1804 was made memorable by the Rev. Richard Watson joining the ranks of the New Connexion. He travelled for eight years in that body, and they claim the honour of bringing that extraordinary man out of obscurity. Two of the sermons in his published works were first preached in New Connexion chapels. During his itinerancy with them he was a member of the Annual Committee, and three times secretary of the Conference. Dr. Bunting reintroduced him into the Wesleyan body, in 1812, but he ever held in very high esteem his brethren in the New Connexion.

In 1805 the law was made which requires preachers, at the end of their probation, to answer in public questions relating to their religious experience, call to the ministry, their doctrinal views, &c.

It will be instructive to the present race of Methodists to read the financial conditions on which Methodist preachers consented in 1812 to devote themselves wholly to the ministry. Serious complaints had

been made respecting the inadequacy of the income of the preachers to meet their necessities. A committee was appointed by the Conference of 1812 to examine and report thereon. After a candid consideration of the subject, it was resolved that, in addition to the use of a house and furniture at the expense of the circuit, every married preacher in full connection should receive, for himself and wife, £12 per quarter; "*not less* than £2 per quarter for a servant;" and, in addition to these items, "*not less* than 14s. per week for board." The allowance from the Paternal Fund for boys under eight years of age, and for girls under twelve, to be £6 per annum; then they retire from the fund. Charge for medical attendance and travelling expenses are to be paid by the quarterly meeting. Considerable uneasiness and anxiety was felt in many parts of the Connexion, in the years 1814-16, with regard to the legal safety of some of the chapels which had belonged to the parent Society before the year 1797. Those anxieties were not favourable to the spread of the Word of God.

In 1818 a Home Mission was established to introduce Methodism into new localities. The sum of £424 was given by the circuits to aid that mission. In 1824 the mission was relinquished, and Ireland was selected as the place on which to concentrate effort; and one of the English preachers was appointed to superintend the work. It has continued with varying success to the present time. In 1883 there were seven stations in Ireland, with a total membership of 801, being only an average of 114 members per station. The home missionary operations were resumed some years afterwards, and in 1883 occupied nine stations in England, with a membership of 1214; and for their support the circuits contributed £948 during the year.

In 1823, the general rules of the Connexion were considered, amended, and published, with the sanction of the Conference.

The same Conference ordered the publication of a monthly Magazine for Sunday scholars at twopence. The Conference of 1827 ordered the publication of a Catechism for the use of children, which was prepared by the Rev. Abraham Scott. A larger Catechism for the use of elder children was written by the Rev. William Cooke, D.D., and published about the year 1848. The same minister prepared a new and enlarged edition of that Catechism, published in 1881.

A Connexional Magazine was commenced in January, 1798, at the price of 6d. monthly. It has been continued to the present time. To promote the circulation of these several publications, a Book-room and an editor were indispensable. The former was located at Hanley from 1798 to 1832, when it was removed to Manchester. In 1827, the Rev. W. Shuttleworth was appointed editor and steward, and the business rapidly advanced. In 1827, the capital stock amounted to £1305, and the annual profits to £113. Five years afterwards, the capital was £2500, and the yearly profits over £500, while the Magazine was greatly improved; the third series was commenced in 1833. In 1844, it was found expedient to remove the Book-room to London, where it has since remained, and the Rev. John Bakewell was appointed editor. In 1848, the Rev. William Cooke, D.D., the eminent theologian and divine, was the editor of the Magazine, and in that capacity, and as book-steward, he has rendered more valuable service to the Connexion than any other minister. The Rev. Charles Dewick Ward, D.D., was appointed editor and book-steward in 1880. The capital stock that year was £2980, and the profits £243. In 1883, the capital was £3287, and the profits £279.

The Methodist Hymn-book had been used in the New Connexion from 1797. In the year 1834, a new hymn-book was prepared and published, which was intended more as a source of profit to the Connexion than as a superior book to the one which it supplanted. This also was displaced by another and very much improved collection, including 1024 hymns, compiled chiefly by the Rev. Henry Piggin, and published in May, 1863. It was at that time the best collection in use in any branch of the great Methodist family. Its marked superiority soon led to the preparation of other improved and enlarged collections for the use of "the people called Methodists."

The years 1836 and 1837 were periods of unrest in many Methodist societies, owing to the trial and expulsion of the Rev. Dr. Warren from the Wesleyan body. At Dudley and Stourbridge large numbers left the Wesleyans and joined the New Connexion, adding greatly to their influence and usefulness in those towns. An effort was made to bring all those who had left the parent Society into union with the New Connexion; but some of the separatists made such radical

changes in the constitution a condition of joining, that the New Connexion decided not to make such concessions, though many changes were made. Those who did not unite with this body formed themselves into a new branch of the Methodist family, known for some years as the Wesleyan Association. They afterwards relinquished most of those extreme views which prevented their proposed union.

The year 1841 was a painfully memorable one to the New Connexion, owing to the necessary expulsion of two of the ministers, J. Barker and W. Trotter. Joseph Barker had used his position to advocate low socialist and infidel opinions. Much mischief was done; for twenty-nine societies, including 4348 members, were lost to the Connexion. After trying his new doctrines for some years, he found out the delusion into which he had fallen, returned to the Christian faith, and endeavoured to the uttermost to undo the mischief he had done. He is said to have joined the Primitive Methodists; wrote and published his autobiography in 1869, in which he recanted all his errors; was reconciled to most of his former brethren in the New Connexion; and died a penitent Christian, 15th September, 1875. It was not until 1855, fourteen years afterwards, that the number of members in Society reached the total at which they stood at the date of Mr. Barker's expulsion. A small work was published in 1841, entitled *The Beacon*, and also some tracts by the Rev. W. Cooke, D.D., which prevented the breach becoming wider than it otherwise would have been. The Connexion suffered greater losses through Mr. Barker's unfaithfulness and treachery than from any other cause in its whole history of over eighty years. The financial difficulties of the Connexion became so great and oppressive, that in 1842, nearly £900 were collected to lessen them, £840 more in 1843, and the Conference of that year ordered a special collection to be made through the circuits, which secured £5000 more towards the same object.

The Conference of 1837 originated a mission in Canada, which became a great blessing to that country. Mr. William Ridgway, one of the leading New Connexion laymen, having visited that locality, made such representations of the claims of Canada for the Gospel, that the Rev. John Addyman became the pioneer missionary there. He was joined two years afterwards by the Rev. Henry Only Crofts, D.D.

Mr. Addyman still survives, having been in the ministry fifty-one years. Dr. Crofts entered into rest in the year 1880. The Canadian mission was a success; but a few years ago, in 1875, it was united to the other branches of Methodism in Canada, in order to make one large, undivided Methodist Church in that dominion.

The jubilee of the New Connexion was a time of great rejoicing. The Jubilee Conference was held at Manchester, the Rev. Thomas Allin presiding. The sittings commenced 1st June, 1846. The first important special business done was the final consideration and adoption of a Deed-poll, which provides for the security of the property of the Connexion, the preservation of its doctrines, and the continuance of its principles and discipline. By the Deed-poll a legal identity is given to the Connexion in the persons of twenty-four Guardian Representatives—twelve ministers and twelve laymen—whose names are inserted in the deed, with provisions for filling up the vacancies that will necessarily occur. The attendance of six of the Guardian Representatives is requisite to legalise the Conference. After its adoption, the Deed-poll was executed by every member of the Conference; and it has since been duly enrolled in the High Court of Chancery. A model Trust-Deed, and a form of conveyance of freehold land for Connexional chapels, schools, and parsonages, were also decided upon; and a Book-room Deed also agreed to, each of them adapted to the Deed-poll.

At the end of fifty years, the number of members in the Connexion was only 20,002—namely, in England, 15,610; Ireland, 932; Canada, 3460.

It was resolved to raise a Jubilee Fund of not less than £20,000, but the result was only £7721. Towards that fund there was raised in 1847, £2829; in 1848, £1567; in 1849, £3402. About £5100 was voted to remove chapel debts, £1300 to promote missions; and various sums were given or loaned to the Paternal Fund, the Beneficent Fund, for a theological college, for aged ministers, and to lessen other financial burdens which fettered the agencies of the Church. On the 5th June a Jubilee tea-meeting was held in the Free Trade Hall, Manchester, which was attended by more than four thousand persons. Several important schemes for the extension of the work, which it was

hoped the fund would enable the Connexion to undertake, could not be commenced for want of finances. One result, however, was attained, which will be a permanent memorial. The Revs. Thomas Allin, William Cooke, Samuel Hulme, and Philip James Wright conjointly wrote a Jubilee volume, which had a considerable sale, and which chronicles much important and valuable information, both historical and biographical, relating to the Connexion during the previous fifty years. From that work many facts in the preceding pages are obtained. Mr. Baggaly's "Digest" and the "Minutes of Conference" supply the details which follow.

At the Conference of 1848, arrangements were made for the re-establishment of home missions in England; but the work grew slowly, and ten years afterwards, in 1857, a plan was adopted for the management of home mission chapels. In 1865 the present Home Missionary Society was inaugurated.

Although the Jubilee Fund had been of much use in relieving the Connexion of some financial burdens, yet great embarrassment was felt in many places in 1849, from inadequate funds, and at the following Conference a plan was adopted which entirely extinguished the debts of the Connexion at that time.

In 1851 the Methodist Societies in England were in a very painful state of unrest, owing to the expulsion in 1849 from the Wesleyan Conference of several prominent preachers—the Rev. James Everett, Samuel Dunn, William Griffith, James Bromley, Thomas Rowland, and others. Although in three years more than 100,000 members were separated from the parent Society, very few of them were attracted to the New Connexion. In 1851, 1853, and 1854, this body had to report to each Conference a decrease, which was a source of much anxiety and solicitude, and a special service of humiliation before God was held at the Conference of 1853. In 1851 overtures were made from the Wesleyan delegates—the seceders from the parent Society—towards union with the New Connexion, but no union took place. In 1854 an effort was made to change the name of New Connexion, as it was not then new, and many thought the name was a hindrance to others uniting with them. It was, however, resolved by the Conference of that year not to change the name, as

the new Deed-poll had only been adopted a few years. The rules of the Connexion were revised in 1854.

The Manchester Conference of 1859 was memorable for the establishment of a mission to China. From a conviction that the encouragement of foreign missions would not hinder home work, that step was taken. The Rev. William Cooke was the president, and by his genial advocacy a successful work was commenced in that country, which in 1883 reported 62 chapels, 34 societies, and 1161 members, under the superintendence of the Rev. John Innocent, who is the principal of a training institution in China, established in 1875. In 1862 a mission was established in Australia, which has but two societies at present—one at Adelaide and one at Melbourne—with two missionaries, and 119 members.

At the Conference of 1860 a Trustees' Mutual Guarantee Fund was established against losses by fire, to include all Connexional property.

A training institution for the preparation of young men for the ministry was for some years under consideration. The Conference of 1861 resolved upon having one; and owing to the noble generosity of Thomas Firth, of Sheffield, such an institution was erected at Ranmoor, a suburb of that town. Its trustees were appointed in 1862, and the college was opened and a tutor selected in 1864. In 1880 there were nine students in residence, who paid £10 per annum. The president of the Conference was the principal and only tutor at that period. The college building cost £8710.

The Conference of 1865 resolved that a copy of Bagster's Bible, the Conference *Journal*, the Deed-poll, and the General Rules of the Society, should in future be the insignia of office of the president, to be handed down in succession. The same Conference resolved that all future Conferences of their body should meet on the second Monday in June, instead of Whit-Monday as previously, the latter being a movable date, which was often attended with much inconvenience to both ministers and laymen. Mr. Alderman Blackburn of Leeds, a wealthy layman, presented to each of the ex-presidents of Conference, for fourteen years previously to the year 1863, a copy of Bagster's Bible and the new hymn-book, then first published. A new tune-book, adapted

to the hymn-book, was prepared by the Rev. J. Ogden, and published in 1866.

The Conference of 1868 resolved on a new departure from existing usage, and consented to ministerial appointments being continued for five successive years in circuits where two-thirds of the quarterly meeting request it. The limit had previously been three years.

A further attempt at union was made at the Conference of 1870, when the terms for a federal union with the Bible Christians were considered, and resolutions recorded thereon. The same Conference resolved that home missionaries of fourteen years' standing be allowed to attend the Conference, but not to vote.

The Conference of 1871 approved of the raising of a fund to extinguish the Chapel Fund debt. The sum of £4672 was raised, which accomplished the object desired.

The Conference held at Manchester in 1872 was presided over by the Rev. Joseph H. Robinson, the secretary being the Rev. J. C. Watts. Both these ministers had spent many years in the Canada Mission. Methodist union in Canada was fully considered in 1873, and the union was consummated in 1874.

The Conference of 1876 was made memorable by acts of fraternisation of considerable interest. The Methodist Church of Canada sent as a deputation to the Conference the venerable and Rev. Egerton Ryerson, D.D., and Mr. David Savage, who presented an address of brotherly fraternisation. They were most cordially welcomed. Dr. Ryerson remained some time in England as the guest of various friends of the Connexion. His portrait was engraved and published in the Magazine as a pleasant memorial of his visit. At the same Conference the Rev. Alexander Clark, D.D., presented a fraternal message from the General Conference of the Methodist Protestant Church in the United States of America. Fraternal messages were returned to both documents. The same Conference sent its first fraternal message to the Primitive Methodists of England, which greetings were continued and reciprocated for three years, when, in 1879, the New Connexion Conference, seeing how kindly their written messages had been received, appointed two of the members of the Conference to visit the ensuing Primitive Methodist Conference, two others to visit the Methodist Free

Church Conference, and two others to visit the Wesleyan Conference. Each of the Conferences appointed representatives to return these fraternal visits.

At the Conference of 1876, Mr. Mark Firth presented £1000 to the Endowment Fund of the College, and the Home and Foreign Missionary Societies were united under one committee of management.

In 1877 a loan fund was commenced, for the purpose of aiding chapel trusts and of encouraging the erection of new chapels.

The Conference of 1880 was remarkable for its record of deaths among the ministers, no less than six of whom, all men of distinction, had died during the year. Their names were Parkinson Thomas Gilton; William Baggaly; Henry Only Crofts, D.D.; John Taylor; Charles Mann; and Benjamin B. Turnock, A.B. The four first named had been presidents of the Conference. As many as six ministers had never before died in one year.

The year 1881 was a memorable one for the New Connexion, owing to the unexpected death of Mark Firth, Esq., the most benevolent layman of that body. He was a Guardian Representative; had been a member of the Society all his life; had contributed largely to the endowment of their College; had built and endowed almshouses, and a College for Higher Education for the town of Sheffield, in addition to many other acts of beneficence. The Conference, in a resolution, recorded its deep sense of the loss their societies had sustained by his decease. Its Minutes also record a resolution of their deep sympathy with their Wesleyan brethren, who that year had suffered so severely by the deaths of the Revs. Dr. Jobson, Dr. Punshon, Samuel Coley, and William O. Simpson,—men of distinguished ability and piety. The Minutes also contain a congratulatory resolution to the Right Hon. W. E. Gladstone, on his again accepting the Premiership of England. The increase of members that year was 797.

One of the special resolutions passed at the Conference of 1882 was of thanks to those ministers and laymen who had represented their societies at the Ecumenical Conference of 1881. One of their laymen representatives at that assembly, Mr. Edwin Lumby, died in London during the sittings of the Conference. He addressed the meeting at one of its sessions, and his death was recorded at a later one. Raffles

and lotteries at bazaars were condemned by resolution at the Conference of 1882. The Rev. Dr. Ward was sent to Australia to visit their societies there, with the view of obtaining accurate information as to the desirability of retaining or transferring them. His report at the ensuing Conference led to the retaining both societies, and appointing the Revs. Enoch Grattan and William Shaw as new ministers, to try to give both a fresh and progressive start. The increase of members throughout their societies, in 1882, was 861.

The Conference of 1883 was occupied by the consideration of the Rev. Dr. Ward's report of his visit to their societies in Australia, the selection and appointment of two ministers in place of those on the stations, and by the appointment of a properly qualified medical missionary for the societies in China. The increase of members was 668. There were no deaths of ministers reported at the Conference of 1883,—an exemption of rare occurrence.

The Methodist New Connexion has a literature of considerable importance and value. The venerable William Cooke, D.D., occupies the foremost place in its catalogue of authors. The Rev. Abraham Scott wrote and published many important works in the early part of this century; and the Revs. Thomas Allin, and James Stacey, D.D., have published some books that will live.

The total number of members in Society in 1883 was 29,299, the Canadian branch being separated.

The Bible Christians.

THIS section of the Methodist family was originated by William O'Bryan, a Cornish Methodist local preacher, who was born at Gunwen, Luxillian, 6th February, 1778. He was converted amongst the Methodists in 1795, at the age of eighteen, and soon afterwards began to preach. In 1804 he had a desire to enter the Methodist ministry, but no preacher took him by the hand in that direction; yet as a local preacher he soon became extensively useful and popular. In 1809, he took the appointments of the circuit minister during a visit he paid to Yorkshire, and in that work he was so much blessed and encouraged, that he commenced Methodist services in several neglected villages, and was the means of gathering into Society a considerable number of members. These increased in proportion to the wider sphere of his labours; but instead of encouraging him in this pioneering evangelistic work, the preachers opposed him, and desired him to keep to his own circuit plan appointments. Learning that there were many villages eastward of his residence destitute of Gospel preaching, he devoted much of his time and most of his evenings to preaching in those places. In this work he had the two-fold satisfaction of his own convictions that he was doing right, and the evidence of the blessing of God constantly accompanying his efforts to do good. Converts multiplied rapidly, but the stationed ministers did not care to recognise those converts; and because he

persisted in his voluntary and unpaid services as evangelist, in November, 1810, he was formally excluded from membership in the Methodist society, in the chapel of which he had given the freehold land,—the only charge against him being his irregular attempts to save souls.

Not discouraged by this action of the circuit minister, in the true spirit of a Christian missionary he went, more zealously than ever, to the places where he had already gathered members, or they would have been forsaken; and into other villages beyond, where no Methodist preacher had been, and where the Gospel was most needed, as Mr. Wesley had himself directed. Mrs. O'Bryan, who possessed an excellent gift in prayer, began to hold meetings near home, whilst her husband went to distant places; multitudes flocked to hear her, and were much profited. Scores of persons were converted in about four years, and yet no regular minister would take charge of them. In July, 1814, the Rev. Francis Collier, the Methodist Superintendent of the Bodmin Circuit, desired the co-operation of Mr. O'Bryan, and for a time they laboured in harmony; but on learning that there were fourteen parishes in East Cornwall and West Devon in which there was no evangelical preaching, he began to preach there also, and a blessed work began in several places. In the summer of 1815, the Methodist preacher endeavoured to persuade him to discontinue his itinerant labours outside the circuit, but that advice he could not follow without neglecting hundreds of his converts, and violating his own conscience. In June, 1815, the preacher met Mr. O'Bryan's class, for their quarterly tickets, in his absence, and on leaving the place, St. Blazey, no ticket was left for Mr. O'Bryan, which act excluded him from membership in the Methodist society. The people were with Mr. O'Bryan, and they urged him to continue his labours as he had done for six years without any stipend. At the quarterly meeting held in September, 1815, his case was fully considered, and the preacher in charge, Mr. Banwell, said he would not preach in any house where Mr. O'Bryan preached. Thus all the overtures of the people were unavailing; the preachers determined he must submit to confine his labours to his own circuit, or be excluded from their society. It would not be possible to describe the benefit of his labours up till that time, and to discontinue them he could not. He had no intention of forming a separate society; but the subject came before

him in a manner so urgent and pressing, that on Monday, 9th October, 1815, after preaching to quite a multitude of people at Lake, in Shebbear, at the end of a third service, he desired those who desired to meet him in class, and form a society, to give in their names. Twenty-two names were then entered, including Mr. and Mrs. Thorne and their five children, at whose house the meeting was held. These people were not acquainted with the opposition Mr. O'Bryan had met with from the preachers, or they would have been more determined than they were to secure pastoral oversight. He had given up a good business that he might devote himself to preaching the Gospel; he desired only a maintenance for his family, which the people were willing to give him, and with the right hand of fellowship from the preachers he would have been content. The latter being refused to him, he was compelled to take care of the converts God had given him; and when it became known what unkindness the preachers had manifested, his course of action was made clear to him. The formation of the first society under such favourable circumstances greatly encouraged the evangelist to proceed with his work. Invitations to preach came to him from places around in such numbers, that to keep pace with them he had to travel much, and preach daily, sometimes twice, and on Sundays three and four times. The Wesleyan minister, George Banwell, encouraged the circulation of false and slanderous reports against Mr. O'Bryan, but the work was not hindered in his hands. Mrs. O'Bryan gave up her shop, and settled at Holsworthy, at which place, and in their house, on 1st January, 1816, the first quarterly meeting of the new Society was held, when the number of adherents, members in Society, was 237. Although the hand of God was so manifestly in the work, a spirit of persecution arose, even at Holsworthy, but they were encouraged by the happy conversions which attended almost every service. Amongst the first members of the infant Society were members of the families of Thorne, Rattenbury, Reed, Courtice, Cottles, and others. James Thorne, one of the first members, became a pillar of strength in the Society for above half-a-century; in March, 1815, James Thorne gave himself up to itinerate as a minister, by which means the people had fortnightly instead of monthly services. In April, when the second quarterly meeting was held, the members had increased to 412, and

three months later they were 496. A third itinerant, John Ham, was employed, and the people cheerfully gave money for their support. By the time the first year had expired, 567 members were in church-fellowship. This was followed by an extraordinary love-feast, and an almost all-night prayer-meeting, during which about fifty persons were converted, and several were sanctified.

Hitherto the meetings of the Society had been held in dwelling-houses or barns; but a drunken clergyman being appointed to the parish of Shebbear, where the Thorne family resided, they were obliged to absent themselves from the church, and they built for the new Society their first chapel, which was opened 29th May, 1818. That was the first Nonconformist place of religious worship built in that district. During that year three circuits had been formed, having six itinerant preachers, and a membership of 1146 persons. At Lake, Shebbear, a Tract Society was formed, and the first Sunday school in the denomination commenced in July, 1818. The work spread on every side, and great was the joy of those engaged in it, although various kinds of opposition and coercion were vigorously tried in several localities. Soon afterwards the Rules of the Societies were published, with an account of Mr. O'Bryan's separation from the Methodists.

The rapidity with which the work spread made it desirable to take united counsel, and to survey the whole field of operation. The first Conference was held at Baddash, Launceston, and continued from 17th to 26th August, 1819. Twelve itinerant preachers were present; Mr. O'Bryan presided, and James Thorne was secretary. A Deed-Poll for securing chapels was read and adopted, and women-preaching was freely discussed and unanimously approved of; James Thorne was received into full connexion, and the Minutes report 12 circuits, 27 preachers, 13 males, and 14 females.

The work had hitherto been confined to parts of Cornwall and Devon most destitute of religious privileges. In 1820 it spread into Kent, and a prosperous society was commenced at Chatham. At the second Conference there were nineteen male itinerant preachers and nineteen females, and six others in full connexion. The stipend of the preachers was fixed at twelve pounds per annum, with house rent, coals, and candles found, and six pounds yearly for children. In 1821,

at the third Conference, eighteen circuits were established, and eighteen female itinerant preachers were employed, one in nearly every circuit, so acceptable were their public services amongst the class of people they addressed: they had then twenty-seven male preachers. At that Conference, the Itinerant Preachers' Annuitant Society was formed, by their payment of £1 each per annum for the relief of widows and worn-out preachers who were members. A Missionary Society was formed that year, with a working committee of three preachers and four laymen; Messrs. O'Bryan and James Thorne made a tour over the societies on behalf of their missionary operations, which yielded £17 to the funds. In 1821 one of the female preachers visited London, and made a deep impression on the congregations she addressed. This was followed by the establishment of a society in London before the end of 1822; but it was accompanied by the trial and imprisonment of the preacher for no other crime than preaching the Gospel out of doors. That act only intensified the interest of the people in the preacher, and greatly strengthened the cause, so that at the end of the year, fifty-seven members were in the London society. At the Conference of 1822, an Address to the Societies was agreed upon, and they denominated themselves "Arminian Bible Christians." A new society was commenced at Brighton that year.

The fifth Conference was held at Stoke-Damarel, in July, 1823, at which the Rules of the Preachers' Fund Society were agreed upon, and a Chapel Trust-Deed also. The itinerant preachers were—males, 35; females, 21; members in Society, 5050; with 27 circuits in six districts. A magazine and hymn-book were published; Samuel Thorne was appointed book-steward, and Mr. O'Bryan and James Thorne had a roving commission to pay apostolic visits to the societies. In 1824, James Thorne, with three assistants, came to London to re-invigorate the cause there; yearly district meetings were appointed to be held, at which preachers and a steward from each society were to attend. The Book-room was fixed at Stoke-Damarel, with Samuel Thorne as steward. The members that year were 6200; and the collection for missions, £210.

At the seventh Conference, 1825, four lay representatives were present with the preachers; and acting on a recommendation sent by

the London Society, the persons who should compose the leaders, local preachers, quarterly, and district meetings were determined upon, and a general Chapel Fund was established. The societies were increasing, and encouragement was given to open-air services, which from the first had been much resorted to. The finances were unequal to the demands, and the Conference reduced the allowance for each preacher's wife by ten shillings per quarter; whilst the female preachers were admitted to membership in the Preachers' Fund Society, on paying ten shillings per year.

In 1826, the members were reported at 6433; the preachers were 88, including 27 females; and the Chapel Fund yielded £55, 11s. The work continued to prosper, and 1621 were added to the membership in 1827; but the payments to the preachers were so small that only few could marry on such small stipends.

The Conference of 1828 was memorable as the first which was composed of "ministers and representatives of the people denominated Bible Christians," the word Arminian having been dropped from their name. The authority of the Conference was fully considered, and resolutions passed limiting the control of Mr. O'Bryan, who, up to the Conference of 1827, had exercised a kind of supreme authority; he had presided at nine Conferences.

At the Conference of 1829, Mr. O'Bryan, not agreeing with the action of the Financial Committee, separated himself from the main body of his brethren. He attended the first sitting of the Conference; but finding that there was opposition to what he desired, he rose and said, "I will do no more business with you. I adjourn this Conference to Liskeard next Monday." After his departure, twenty-six itinerant preachers, three lay representatives, twenty-two local preachers and friends—fifty-one in all, being nearly all who were present—signed a paper signifying their satisfaction with the conduct of the Finance Committee; after which the Conference proceeded with the usual business, Andrew Cory being elected president, and James Thorne secretary. This disruption was a source of much pain to the minds of many, and caused a considerable decline in the membership; but as the brethren were united, an increase was reported in 1831, and again in 1833. From that time the number of female itinerant preachers

was steadily reduced, and for about ten years they remained at only ten or eleven, the members in Society showing a gratifying yearly increase. This was the more remarkable, seeing the extremely straitened financial condition of the circuits; but the preachers met the case nobly, and out of their scanty pittance, cheerfully gave up thirty shillings, and their wives a pound, yearly. This act of self-denial was continued during the years 1830 and 1831.

A society having been commenced in Canada and Prince Edward Island, seventy-seven members were reported to the Conference of 1833 from that country.

In 1835, those members who had seceded with Mr. O'Bryan sought re-union with their brethren; and when the breach was healed, the Conference gave Mr. O'Bryan £85, and out of their very limited means voted him the sum of £20 a-year for life. He afterwards went to America, was much respected, and died there, 8th January, 1868.

The healing of the breach was followed by a large increase of members: fully 2761 additions were reported at the Conference of 1836, and a committee was appointed to arrange for an increase of the stipends of the preachers. At the Conference of 1837, a new and comprehensive scale, to meet every case of the preachers and their families, was agreed upon. The twenty-first Conference, 1839, was the first to report an analysis of the condition of the Connexion, when there were—Chapels, 272; local preachers, 813; members, 11,606, with those on trial; Sunday scholars, 7814; teachers, 1780; itinerant preachers, 95, including 11 females; receipts for missions, £701. The prospect was very cheering.

In 1843, a committee was appointed to guard the privileges of the societies. In 1844, the word "stations" was changed for "circuits"; Home Missions were promoted; a Total Abstinence Society commenced; and a Benefit Society. Steps were taken for the insurance of the chapels in case of fire.

In 1850, two preachers, James Way and James Rowe, were sent to Australia to commence a Bible Christian mission in the southern part of that continent. Other missionaries followed them there in 1853. That mission has been a great blessing to the people there, and a great success as a mission. Three missionaries were sent out to

America in 1851, but their efforts were not successful. The Conference of 1850 was composed of an equal number of ministers and laymen—sixty-two; and it was there agreed that every fifth year the Conference should consist of equal numbers. Recently a permissive rule was made for equal numbers to meet yearly. All the Conferences previous to the year 1852 were held in Cornwall or Devonshire, but it was that year held at Southsea, Portsmouth. It has since been held at Bristol, at Newport, Isle of Wight, and in London.

The Bible Christians having had considerable prosperity, it was determined by the Conference of 1855 that the societies in Canada and Prince Edward Island should be united, and together form a Conference of their own, affiliated to that in England. These terms were accepted, and that relationship was maintained for nearly thirty years. Owing to the general desire for union amongst the various Methodist bodies in Canada, the Bible Christians sent a deputation to the Conference of 1883, asking and urging for permission to unite with their brethren; but the Conference did not give the permission asked, desiring further information before doing so, although it was stated that 2462 of their Canadian members were for the union, with only 988 against. On the return of the deputation to that country, the adjourned Canadian Conference met, and resolved to join the Union without the consent of their brethren in England; so that in Canada the happy fact is announced, that in the summer of 1884 all the branches of the Methodist family will be united in one great ecclesiastical community, as the Methodist Church of Canada, the largest church in the Dominion.

The subject of union had been previously considered at several Conferences; at that of 1866, proposals were made for the union of the Bible Christians with the Methodist New Connexion, but there was so much timidity manifested, and so little faith and courage,—although there were many evidences that the movement was indicated by divine Providence,—that no forward action was taken.

The Conference of 1867 was memorable as that at which arrangements were made for commemorating the Jubilee of the Connexion. It was resolved to raise a fund for the purpose of removing some debts, but more especially to give a new start to several departments. The scheme included the erection of a Jubilee Chapel in London, the estab-

lishment of a Book-room and Missionary Society in the Metropolis, and other purposes. This Special Fund was distributed during the Jubilee Year, 1868, in the following manner, the total sum raised being £3300:—Towards the New Chapel in London, £500; to the Preachers' Fund, £650; to the Missionary Society, £600: to the Chapel Loan Fund, £1200; to the Adelaide Chapel, £200; to the Shebbear School, £150; the preachers' stipends were raised to £54 per annum, unmarried men and probationers to £50. In 1869, the Book-room was removed from Shebbear to London; the venerable James Thorne was thanked for his forty years' service as Editor and Book-steward, and the Rev. F. W. Bourne appointed his successor in those offices, which he has filled with much credit to himself, and benefit to the Connexion. A small financial testimonial was raised for Mr. Thorne,—far too small for the value of his services; but in 1872 he was called to his higher and more enduring reward. He was a most devoted servant of the cause, and an earnest, godly man. The statistics of the Connexion, presented to the Jubilee Conference in 1868, were as follows:—itinerant preachers, 253; local preachers, 1734; chapels, 784; preaching places, 267; members, 26,327; on trial, 1080; total, 27,407; Sunday-school teachers, 8713; scholars, 42,458.

Since the Jubilee, the Connexion has been making steady progress in numbers, in new chapels and finances. In 1876, the Australian societies were permitted to have a conditional Conference of their own. In 1880, they desired permission to unite with other Methodist bodies in Australia; the project was not then encouraged. Since then the Rev. F. W. Bourne has been sent by the English Conference to both Australia and Canada, to obtain fuller information respecting both those branches of their Connexion: and as Canada has now joined the general union in the Dominion, there are many reasons which will lead to the same action in Australia. It is an act of expediency which will be better for the Colonists, although such diminution of the total membership of the Connexion is not favourably received in England.

The Connexional School, which had for many years existed at Shebbear in Devonshire, was enlarged in 1876 and placed on a broader basis, was ordered to be called a College in future, and was to include the training of young men for the ministry. In 1877, the Conference

representation was enlarged, so as to permit an equal number of ministers and laymen to attend every Conference, but every fifth year they must be equal.

The Conference of 1879 was memorable for the number of fraternal deputations which were permitted to visit and address the assembly. They were from the Wesleyan Methodists, the New Connexion, the Methodist Free Churches, and Primitive Methodists. The same happy and pleasant episodes have been accepted and welcomed at subsequent assemblies; these are taken as indicating a desire for union in some form at no distant period.

The sixty-fifth annual Conference was held at Exeter, in July, 1883. There were present 126 preachers and laymen, and amongst the preachers were two of more than ordinary interest,—the Rev. James Rowe, one of the first missionaries to South Australia, and the Rev. W. S. Pascoe, who represented the Canadian Conference for the last time previous to its absorption. The present state of the Bible Christian Connexion will be understood by the following statistics presented to that Assembly: ministers, 307; local preachers, 1920; chapels, 963; preaching places, 184; members, 34,668; on trial, 1108; Sunday-school teachers, 10,250; scholars, 56,911; increase of members during the year, 748. The College at Shebbear was reported to be an educational success, yielding a good financial profit; the trust property of the Connexion had increased during the year by over £16,000. The Book Concern had during the year yielded profits which enabled the Conference to distribute £530 to help the most needy funds. A Thanksgiving Fund was also reported as in process of collection, which was hoped to realise £20,000; and it was stated that more money had been raised for that fund than for any other special object in the Connexion during any one year. It should be noted, that in all probability the return of members in 1884 will be reduced by the separation of the 3450 who have been incorporated in the Methodist Church of Canada.

The doctrines held by the Bible Christians are the same as those of the Wesleyan Methodists, and of the other branches of the Methodist family. In discipline they varied but little; one main point was the regular employment of female preachers as itinerants. These have

ceased to form part of their regular ministry. The government of the societies, and the constitution of the Church courts, is almost identical with the other Connexions.

These people have a literature, but it is limited to but few works. The Connexional Magazine, which was commenced in 1821-22, with James Thorne as Assistant Editor, has been maintained with considerable ability and success, and is now in its sixty-third year; for the juveniles, the *Youth's Miscellany*, monthly at one penny, has been well sustained both by the Editor and the readers. There are also a few other books on their catalogue which have commanded large sales, and are still popular and useful. They have a Connexional Hymn-book which yields a profit yearly: and in Biography, they publish a "Life of James Thorne," by his Son; "Life of William M. Bailey," by F. W. Bourne; "The King's Son; or, A Memoir of Billy Bray," by F. W. Bourne; a "Memoir of Mrs. E. Chalcraft," by F. W. Bourne: also, "Lives" of William O'Bryan, their Founder; of Samuel Thorne, Printer; of Mrs. Bendle, and Abraham Bastard. They also publish some Sermons and Pamphlets.

As a community, they possess all the elements requisite for developing a large church, but their great want has been the finances necessary to enable them to undertake new responsibilities when they have presented themselves. The union of this body with that of the New Connexion would be likely to prove beneficial to both, and be a saving of both finances and labour.

Primitive Methodism.

THE Primitive Methodist Connexion has been the most vigorous and the most successful of the Societies. It originated in the county of Stafford, but on the borders of Cheshire; its founders were Hugh Bourne, William Clowes, and other earnest men, who had been associated with the Wesleyan Methodists, but who were unwisely excluded from membership therein for attending and encouraging camp-meetings.

Hugh Bourne was descended from an old Norman family, whose ancestor came to England at the Norman Conquest; his parents were settled in Staffordshire, and were in humble circumstances. His father was a wheelwright, farmer, and timber merchant, but was improvident in his habits. He was born at Stoke-on-Trent, 3rd April, 1772. He was seriously influenced by religious impressions by reading John Wesley's "Sermon on the Trinity," and John Fletcher's "Letter on the Spiritual Manifestation of the Sons of God." His conversion took place in his father's house at Bemersley, in the year 1799, when he was about twenty-seven years of age. He at once became an active and useful member of the Methodist Society.

William Clowes was born at Burslem, 12th March, 1780. His mother was the daughter of Aaron Wedgwood, a talented potter in that locality, and William was brought up in that business. He

was converted through attending a Methodist love-feast and prayer-meeting, in January, 1805, and joined the society.

Soon afterwards, both Mr. Bourne and Mr. Clowes read stirring accounts in the *Methodist Magazine* of the camp-meetings held in America, and especially were they impressed by the reading of Joshua Marsden's Narrative of his Mission to Nova Scotia. The minds of both were deeply impressed by those narratives, and the feeling was intensified shortly afterwards by the arrival in England of Lorenzo Dow, who conducted camp-meetings in Staffordshire, which multitudes attended. Mr. Bourne heard Mr. Dow's last sermon there, and purchased of him two pamphlets, one on "How to Hold a Camp-meeting;" the other, "A Defence of Camp-meetings." The prayerful reading of these works awakened new desires and purposes in his mind, and ultimately led to the holding of the first camp-meeting of an entirely English character, which took place at Mow Cop, 31st May, 1807. So great was the interest awakened by that service, that four preaching stands had to be sustained, and thousands of people were present and crowded each of them. The success was complete; the people were delighted; and so much good was done, that a second camp-meeting was held on 18th July, and a third on 22nd August.

The Wesleyan Conference of 1807 disclaimed all connection with those meetings, and in consequence of that decision, the superintendent preacher in the Burslem circuit called a meeting at that place to oppose and discourage camp-meetings in the name of the Conference. Soon after that meeting, the August Camp-meeting was held, which was so great a success, and God's presence was so manifestly with the meeting, that encouraged thereby, the people disregarded the order of the Conference, preferring rather the blessing of God. For giving encouragement to those out-door services, the Rev. John Riles, a good man himself, but in compliance with the order of his Conference, on 22nd June, 1808, expelled Hugh Bourne from membership in the Methodist society, without any trial, without any charge being brought against him, and without his being present at the meeting. William Clowes, who had been a Methodist class-leader and local preacher, was also expelled in 1810, without any trial; but he had taken an active part in the camp-meetings. These meetings were so much blessed to the

people who attended them, that others soon followed in places around, and all of them were so successful, that a considerable number of persons were converted at them, and it became a serious question how best to take care of those converts. New preaching places were opened, and ten brethren who had assisted at the meetings gave their names as lay-preachers, to visit and preach at those places.

The camp-meetings were held for a twofold purpose: first, for the spiritual results which attended them, for many souls were saved through them; secondly, as a counteracting influence to the revelry of the festivals known as the wakes, when most of the people thought of nothing else but eating, drinking, amusements, and almost every kind of sensual indulgence. The motives which prompted their being held were similar to those which prompted Mr. Wesley to encourage and join in holding watch-night services, first amongst the Kingswood colliers, and then in other places. In the light of experience, it is impossible justly to blame the brothers Hugh and James Bourne, and William Clowes, for the part they took in sustaining those out-door services, and in the efforts they made to take care of those persons whose spiritual interests required immediate and prayerful attention. To have neglected them would have been unkind and culpable. How best to accomplish the object was a matter of much prayer and consideration; and in 1809 a plan was drawn out on which the names of nine places were recorded, and the following persons volunteered to hold preaching services there,—namely, Hugh Bourne, James Bourne, T. Cotton, W. Maxfield, T. White, T. Knight, W. Alcock, and W. Turner.

All the efforts made to induce the Methodist preacher at Burslem—Jonathan Edmondson—to recognise these converts as members of their society having failed, they were under the necessity for self-protection to take action of a decisive character; and—no other way being open to them—they formed themselves into a Society, at Standley, March, 1810, for the proper and regular holding of religious services, and the brothers Hugh and James Bourne undertook the charge of them as a separate society. By the summer of 1810, the work had spread into Cheshire and Derbyshire, and on Sunday, 3rd June, 1810, the fourth camp-meeting was held; William Clowes was

there and took part in the services. Ostensibly for that act, his name was left off the Methodist class-paper and dropped from the local preacher's plan; thus, without any charge, or even the form of a trial, he was excluded by John Aikenhead from membership in Methodism. That did not discourage him nor hinder the work; for invitations to preach in neglected villages and towns were sent to him in such numbers, that he was never unoccupied in the evenings or on the Sabbath. When the members of his class remonstrated with the preacher for his conduct, he called attention to the resolution of the Conference as his only defence. Seeing the injustice of the act, most of them left Methodism, and adhered to the society in charge of Mr. Clowes. At that time, Mr. Clowes was earning good wages at his business; but he gave it up, nobly and generously, to become a home missionary on only ten shillings a-week, and left himself free to go and labour wheresoever Providence might call him.

Divine Providence began the work, and the same power directed it in the hands of those who had devoted themselves to carry it on. The members were constantly increasing, and it became evident that organisation must be commenced, though in the most unobtrusive way. The first love-feast was held in Mr. Smith's kitchen at Tunstall, on Good Friday, 1811; there the first Sunday school was opened for the children of their members; the first preaching-room was there built, externally in the form of four cottages; and the first society ticket was issued, 30th May, 1811, the printing of which was paid for by Mr. F. Horsbin, of Ramsor, with the significant text on it, "Concerning this sect, we know that everywhere it is spoken against," Acts xxviii. 22. In July of the same year, it was resolved to collect money in the societies to enable them to pay the salaries and expenses of the two missionaries, Messrs. Clowes and Crawford, and James Steele was appointed the first circuit steward, with 200 members in church-fellowship.

Another important step in advance was taken early in the following year. A meeting was held on 13th February, 1812, when a report was made of the progress of the work. A Plan of the Preaching Services was drawn up, which contained the names of twenty-three preachers and thirty-four places for conducting services, some of them

in the four counties of Staffordshire, Cheshire, Derbyshire, and Lancashire. At that meeting the name PRIMITIVE METHODIST was chosen as their designation. Quarter Day meetings for business were resolved upon, and the CONNEXION FORMED.

Rules for the regulation of the societies having been drawn up with care, they were submitted to the separate societies for their consideration; and their reports having been received, at a meeting held on 3rd January, 1814, the Rules were finally determined and adopted. At a meeting held at Belper, in Derbyshire, the same year, where a society was formed, so great was the interest awakened by the services held, and so much good had been done to the people, that some of the congregations did not break up till a late hour at night. On their way home their happiness was so great, they walked along singing aloud their favourite hymns, which led the villagers to give them the name of RANTERS, a designation by which they were long known in the provinces. At Belper, so manifest were the good effects on the minds and habits of the inhabitants, that Mr. Strutt, a wealthy manufacturer in the locality, sold them a piece of land on which to build a chapel, at the nominal cost of one shilling a-yard. Thus encouraged, the work prospered and spread to other places; and in 1816, Derby became the head of a new circuit. Up to that time all the societies in the Connexion formed only one circuit. In the summer of 1816, a large camp-meeting was held at Mercaston, Derbyshire, at which people from Derby and Nottingham attended. The meeting was conducted on the plan laid down by Joshua Marsden, Methodist missionary. During the same years the members increased so rapidly that Nottingham was formed into a separate circuit: and from that centre the work spread, early in 1817, into Lincolnshire and Rutlandshire, and in 1818 it was commenced in Leicestershire.

It may be helpful to the reader to summarise the facts embraced in the origin and formation of the Connexion:—

1807, *May* 31.—The first camp-meeting held.
„ *July* 18.—The second camp-meeting held.
„ *August* 22.—The third camp-meeting held.
1808, *June* 22.—Hugh Bourne expelled from the Methodist Society by John Riles.

1809.—The first Circuit Plan prepared; had eight preachers' names.

1810, *March* 10.—The first society formed at Standley, because Jonathan Edmondson, Methodist preacher, refused to recognise the members; Hugh Bourne and James Bourne took charge of the society.

„ *June* 3.—William Clowes expelled from the Methodist Society by John Aikenhead; his name being dropped from the class paper and the local preachers' plan.

1811, *Good Friday.*—First love-feast held at Tunstall; first Sunday school opened there; and first preaching-room erected.

„ *May* 30.—First society ticket issued.

„ *July* 26.—First collection made in classes.

„ *July* 26.—James Steele appointed first circuit-steward.

1812, *February* 23.—The name—"Primitive Methodist Connexion"—chosen.

1814, *January* 3.—Rules of the Society adopted and published.

„ —The name "Ranter" first applied to the members at Belper.

The Connexion extended rapidly. In 1818 a Magazine was commenced, which appeared quarterly, and was edited by a member at Leicester; but in 1819 it began to be issued monthly, and has been so continued ever since. Hugh Bourne took charge of the press, and was the Connexional Editor till the year 1843, when John Flesher was appointed. He commenced a new series of the Magazine, and it was then resolved to elect a new editor, or re-elect the former one every five years. The press has been a great power in the Connexion, and the monthly Magazine has since been enlarged and improved so much, that it is now one of the cheapest and best illustrated religious serials in England. The Book-room now issues five monthly magazines and one quarterly review.

Whilst Mr. Bourne was managing the business affairs of the Connexion at Bemersley, aided by his brother James, William Clowes was carrying on his evangelistic labours in the Midland Counties of England, with the abundant blessing of God on his efforts. In 1819, Mr. Clowes opened a new mission at Hull, which was soon made a circuit, and extended its influence nearly to York. During the same year a circuit was formed at Scotter, which included Epworth, the birth-place

of the Wesleys, and twenty-seven other places. In the same year John Garner began a new mission at Loughborough. Indeed so rapidly was the cause spreading in all directions, that it became necessary to arrange for a more complete supervision. Accordingly a preliminary meeting was held at Nottingham, in August, 1819, to arrange for a regular annual meeting of representatives of the Connexion, and the first Conference was appointed to be held in the town of Hull. Fifteen persons formed the meeting, and they then established the basis of representation for future Conferences. They resolved that it was desirable to organise a system for the general management of the Connexion, and that it was desirable to establish annual meetings, to be composed of three delegates from each circuit, one only of whom should be a travelling preacher. They were to be chosen by the quarterly boards of each circuit, on the first day of meeting, the proportion of lay delegates to be considered and approved in the meantime by each of the circuits. It thus appears that the preliminary meeting at Nottingham was really a legislative body, as the proposed basis was accepted by the societies, and on that basis the first regular Conference was held in Hull, on the first Tuesday in May, 1820. The statistics presented on that occasion showed as follows: 8 circuits, 48 preachers, 277 local preachers, 7842 members. The fact that this important step had been taken resulted in unprecedented prosperity.

At the second Conference, held 2nd May, 1821, at Tunstall, the members in Society were 16,394, having doubled during the year. At the third Conference, held at Loughborough, the preachers were 152, members 25,218. At the fourth Conference, held at Leeds, in 1823, the preachers were 202, members 29,472. At the fifth Conference, held at Halifax, the Connexion was divided into four districts, each to send nine delegates to Conference, and two official persons, the members being 33,507. In 1829 the returns were: preachers, 228; local preachers, 249; members, 33,720; chapels, 403. In 1830, the returns were: preachers, 240; local preachers, 2719; members, 35,733; chapels, 421. By this time the Connexion was so firmly established, and had so much of the blessing of God resting on its labours, that it was deemed advisable to take steps to secure the property which had been acquired; the possession of 421 chapels and preaching places

raised in so short a time, gave certainty to the work. Accordingly a Deed Poll was drawn up and registered in the Court of Chancery, 4th February, 1830, by which the property was permanently secured for the purposes for which it was erected; and based on that Deed, all chapels afterwards to be erected would be preserved to the Connexion. The Deed also extends security to chapels, meeting-houses, schools and school-houses, dwelling-houses, buildings, lands, tenements, and estates, whether freehold, copyhold, or leasehold, secured for the use of the Connexion. The Deed Poll further states, that the doctrines taught and believed by the Primitive Methodists are the same as the doctrines of the Church of England, as set forth by the Rev. John Wesley in his "Notes on the New Testament," and in the first four volumes of Sermons written and published by him for his own societies. The Primitives, from the first beginning of their preaching, have given prominence to the doctrine of a full, free, and present salvation, and they encourage their hearers to expect instantaneous conversion,—"believe and be saved;" look, and live. It was the preaching of this doctrine by a Primitive Methodist preacher, which resulted in the conversion of Pastor C. H. Spurgeon, in one of their small chapels.

When Mr. Clowes, by his untiring energy and zeal, had seen the great prosperity of the work at Hull, and in other parts of Yorkshire, he extended his labours further north into Northumberland, and afterwards into Cumberland. He was a model pioneer missionary, and, reviewed now after the lapse of more than half a-century, his work appears marvellous—fully equal to the labours recorded in the Acts of the Apostles. Having witnessed what had been the results of united efforts in the north of England, the great soul of William Clowes was moved in sympathy for the metropolis; and in 1824 he began to work in London. But he soon found that the people were not so easily moved as were those to whom he had long been accustomed to preach. The wheels of the Gospel chariot moved slowly in the capital of the country; so, discouraged by his first effort here, he accepted an invitation into Cornwall. He there found that the Wesleyans and Bible Christians occupied so much of the country, that he shortly after returned into the north of England, there to witness growing prosperity, and sinners savingly converted to God daily. The cause in

London has since that time been well established, and now there are thirteen circuits in the metropolis, with about 5000 members.

Having glanced at the progress of the Connexion during the first twenty years of its existence, and seen its membership increase from only one member in 1809,—Hugh Bourne,—to 35,733 in 1830, we may appropriately ask with the immortal Wesley, "What hath God wrought?"

Numerous minor details in organisation, in the constitution of the Conference and of the various Church courts, have been introduced during the half century since 1830, when the Deed Poll was executed. These it is not needful here further to allude to. In the meantime, a large and important Foreign Missionary Society has been established, which has about ninety-seven stations in Australia, sixteen in New Zealand, and three in Africa. There has also arisen an extended cause in Canada, with about 9000 members; but these, by union with the other branches of Methodism, have assisted in forming the one Methodist Church of Canada. In that way the parent Society in England loses so many of its own children, but they will be as well cared for as ever in the past.

In 1860, the Jubilee of the Connexion was celebrated. The review of the history and progress made in fifty years supplied themes for rejoicing and gratitude. But these were mingled with thoughts of sorrow and sadness; for on looking over the Deed Poll made in 1830, it was found that not one of the original members whose names were there recorded had survived to commemorate the Jubilee. The last survivor, Mr. James Bourne, the lay-helper of his brother Hugh Bourne, died in January, 1860, half-a-year before the celebration. Hugh Bourne, the founder of the Denomination, had died in October, 1852, aged eighty years. James died in 1860, aged seventy-nine years. "God buries His workmen, but carries on His work," said Charles Wesley, and the remark applied equally to the Primitive Methodists. The Jubilee Conference was held at Tunstall, where the first chapel was built, and there a grand Jubilee Chapel was erected, an honour to the body it represented. The Jubilee services consisted of a Sunday Camp-meeting on 10th June, at which some 10,000 people attended. Love-feasts were held in the evening. On Monday, a Jubilee Sermon was preached by Thomas King, the oldest preacher in service, and in the

evening the great meeting was held, and the vast assembly then gathered was overshadowed with the divine presence. A large Jubilee Fund was collected, which greatly aided several agencies needing help.

The Primitive Methodists have established a Superannuated Preachers', Widows', and Orphans' Fund, a General Chapel Fund, an Insurance Company, a Metropolitan Chapel and Schools Building Fund, a Chapel Loan Fund, and four Theological Institutes or Colleges for the training of young ministers. As, however, it was found that more young men were trained in them than were required by the circuits, two of these are discontinued, at least for the present. They have also an efficient Ladies' College at York. A Connexional Sunday-school Union has also been instituted. The Book-room is a large and valuable institution, which owns the copyright of some excellent works; and new, enlarged, and improved Hymn and Tune-books are now in active preparation.

The statistics presented to the Conference in 1883 were as follows: members, 196,480, an increase of 5151; ministers, 1147; local preachers, 15,982; class-leaders, 10,994; Connexional chapels, 4437; other places of worship, 1812; hearers, 572,569; value of church property, £2,812,263, 17s.; debt on property, £1,087,015; Sabbath schools, 4184; teachers, 61,215; scholars, 400,597; scholars who are church members, 28,353; monthly sale of Connexional Magazine, 11,670; Book-room profits, £3915. These are the results of the labours of sixty-three years, since the first Conference was held in 1820. Truly this work is of GOD.

United Methodist Free Churches.

THE body of Christians represented by this designation is made up of several separated parties from the Wesleyan Methodists. The first of these came out in 1828 and 1829, on account of the dispute which arose at Leeds when an organ was set up in Brunswick Chapel against the wishes of the people, and, as they believed, contrary to the laws of the Connexion. These persons were known for several years as Protestant Methodists, because of their protest against the action of the Conference in supporting the organ erection. Another section, a small one, was known as Arminian Methodists. In 1834-35, another dispute arose at Manchester, out of the action taken by the Rev. Samuel Warren, LL.D., in reference to the establishment of a Theological Institution for the training of young men for the Methodist ministry. In consequence of the legal decisions given against Dr. Warren, he was expelled from the Methodist Connexion at the Sheffield Conference of 1835; and a considerable number of members who sympathised with him, either left voluntarily or were expelled from the Methodist Society. These took the name of "The Wesleyan Methodist Association," and held their first Conference at Manchester in August, 1836, when the Protestant Methodists united with them, and they formed a Connexion, but presented no statistics, not having had time for organisation. Dr. Warren presided, and Matthew Johnson was secretary. The second Conference was held at Liverpool in

1837, James Livesey presiding, when the Arminian Methodists united with them, and they unitedly numbered 21,275 members. At that Conference a Home Mission and Connexional Fund and a Book-room were established, and a Connexional Magazine commenced. In 1838, some small Churches in Jamaica, the Independent Methodists of North Wales, and a small Church in Tasmania amalgamated, when the membership reached 26,521.

The year 1839 being the centenary year of Methodism, a Thank-offering Fund was raised to assist in the formation of several Connexional agencies, to promote Sunday schools and Foreign Missions. In 1840 the Foundation Deed of the Connexion was adopted. In 1841 a Chapel Relief Fund and a Preachers' Annuitant Society were commenced, the Rev. Robert Eckett being president, he having been the able advocate and defender of the Connexion from its origin. At that Conference 99 preachers were itinerating amongst 26,591 members. As the wants of the Connexion presented themselves, year by year, they were met and provided for as far as possible. In 1842 a Preachers' Children's Fund was established; and, in 1843, a Beneficent Fund for the temporary assistance of preachers; and a Committee of Privileges was appointed to watch over the interests of the Connexion. In 1845 the Thank-offering Fund, which had realised £3959, was distributed to aid four of the Connexional Agencies—namely, itinerant preachers, local preachers, Sunday schools, and missions.

In 1846 the Rev. Robert Eckett published a pamphlet, "An Exposition of the Laws of Conference Methodism," in justification of the origin of their Connexion, for which he had the thanks of the Conference; and in 1849 he was again thanked for exposing the misrepresentations in the Jubilee volume of the Methodist New Connexion. For two or three years, the societies suffered decrease owing to their taking part in the agitations in the parent Society, to controversy and emigration. In 1854 the Conference expressed a hope for union with some, at least, of those who had left the Methodist Society in 1849-50, who were then forming a separate body, known as "Wesleyan Reformers." In 1855 a committee of twelve from both parties was chosen to consider terms of union. In 1857 the Association reported 110 preachers and 39,986 members.

The Conference of 1857 was the twenty-second of the Wesleyan Methodist Association, and the first of the United Methodist Free Churches, which designation had been agreed upon after much careful deliberation. They were called churches because they believed that each society was a complete church in itself, according to the New Testament usage. They were Methodist Churches because the members had been brought up in Methodism, and they held, believed, and taught the doctrines set forth by John Wesley. They were United Methodists, because they had, in the basis of union agreed upon, the freedom of Congregationalism with the cohesion of Methodism: their organisation combines the best elements of Congregationalism and Connexionalism. They were Free Churches because they had the utmost freedom of representation in their Church courts. The Conference—or Annual Assembly, as they designate their yearly gatherings—may consist of either ministers or laymen, as the separate churches may select or appoint. After the experience of over a quarter of a century since the amalgamation, it is found that ministers usually preponderate, though the average has shown that the Assembly is composed of about an equal number of ministers and laymen. In 1859, the total ministers were 163, members 50,133.

In 1858, the circuits were arranged in districts, and district-meetings were ordered to be held. In 1859 a new Hymn-book was resolved upon, and the Revs. James Everett and Matthew Baxter appointed to the work. The same year the Foundation Deed was altered so as to allow of a minister remaining more than three years in any circuit or church. Subject to annual appointments, under the altered rule, a minister may serve the same church ten or twenty, or more years in succession. No evil results have arisen in consequence of the liberty thus secured. In 1860, a Foreign Missionary Committee was appointed; and also an Educational Committee to prepare a plan for the training of young men for the ministry. The Assembly of 1862 was saddened by the sudden death of the Rev. Robert Eckett; and it refused its consent for their Australian churches receiving State aid. In 1864, a General Missionary Secretary was appointed, and a Mission opened in China, which has been of very slow growth. In the following year, it was resolved to hold an annual

missionary meeting in Exeter Hall, and those meetings have been very successful. In 1865, the new Reference Chapel Deed was adopted. In 1867, great efforts were made to establish a Chapel Loan Fund of £10,000. In 1873, the Rev. Edward Boaden was appointed the official secretary of that fund and two other funds. At the Assembly of 1883, it was reported that the £10,000 had circulated once, by which debts on chapels had been reduced £26,000, and £1316 annually saved in interest. In 1872, the Theological Training Institute was commenced, with the Rev. Thomas Hacking as tutor. He was succeeded in that office by the Rev. Anthony Holliday. In 1875, a Home Mission Chapel Extension Fund of £10,000 was inaugurated; and an educational establishment for sons of ministers and laymen in their churches resolved upon; this was called Ashville College (opened in 1874), and it has since had to be enlarged. In 1876, the Connexional returns were: preachers, 350, local preachers, 3435; class-leaders, 4341; members, 71,317; chapels, 1316; Sunday schools, 1277; teachers, 26,003; scholars, 176,592. In 1883, the returns were: preachers, 391; local preachers, 3417; class-leaders, 4128; members, 75,577; chapels, 1357; Sunday schools, 1352; teachers, 26,851; scholars, 195,681.

The Foreign Missions of the Connexion are represented by 29 circuits in Australia, 3 in China, 2 in East Africa, 9 in Jamaica, 12 in New Zealand, and 5 in West Africa; with a total membership on foreign stations of 8049, and 53 missionaries. The missionary income in 1883 for Home and Foreign Missions was £11,295, besides which £7250 was raised and expended on foreign stations, the total being £19,311 received.

The Book Committee possess a valuable stock of saleable works, besides the Hymn-book, and they hold some useful copyrights, including the biographies written by Mr. Everett. The capital fund of the Book-room, as reported at the Conference of 1883, was £5897. The profits realised in 1883 were £941, which indicates a prosperous condition.

CHARACTERISTIC SKETCHES

OF

METHODIST PREACHERS.

John Wesley, A.M., Founder of Methodism.

[*Born*, 1703: *Entered the Ministry*, 1725: *Died*, 1791.]

ONE of the most remarkable men whose names will live in English history, was John Wesley, the Founder of Methodism. Around his name clusters the greater part of the interest which in the eyes of the world in general attaches to the whole Wesley family. It is chiefly because the system of Methodism, in the order of divine Providence, was originated and carried on by him during his long life, that the fame of the family has been extended, till it has reached the uttermost parts of the earth. His biographers have been numerous: apart from various minor publications devoted to his life, work, and character, twenty-eight separate memoirs of his life have been read by the present writer, that all the leading facts of his career may be gathered up and concentrated in the briefest possible form. Mr. Wesley's Journals have been examined throughout, some portions by the original manuscript, from which hitherto only extracts have been published. More than one hundred original autograph—and mostly unpublished—letters have been read for additional information. From these several sources many new facts have been obtained respecting John Wesley.

Epworth, in Lincolnshire, is said to be the place of his birth; and the time is reported to have been 17th June, 1703. The day was changed to 28th June when the new style was introduced. Owing to the burning of the parish registers in 1709, no record exists to prove either the date of his birth or baptism. Previous to his being ordained deacon in 1725, and priest in 1728, it was required by the Bishop of Oxford that a certificate of his age be produced. From a letter of his father's, we learn that such a document was sent by him to Oxford in 1725; and another in 1728: the latter certificate is as follows:—

"EPWORTH, 23*rd August*, 1728.

"John Wesley, M.A., Fellow of Lincoln College, was twenty-five years old the 17th of June last, having been baptised a few hours after his birth by me.

"SAMUEL WESLEY, *Rector of Epworth.*"

It will be observed that his father does not mention either the place or time of his birth, but only his age last birthday.

There is a tradition still preserved in the family, that he was baptised by the name of John Benjamin, after two of his brothers who died in infancy a few years previously. The second name was never used by the family; and he was the only child out of the nineteen who had two Christian names given at baptism. The desire of his mother was gratified by so naming him; and by mutual consent he was known at home as John, though during the whole of his early years he was called by his parents, and his brothers and sisters, either Jack or Jacky.

Shortly before John Wesley was born, his mother commenced that systematic course of instruction which has made her memorable as a most successful educator of the young. In 1708, when just five years old, John commenced his educational career under his mother's direction; and, with his father's assistance, qualified himself for admission into the Charterhouse School, London. In 1709, on February 9th, the rectory-house at Epworth was entirely burnt down, and by the interposition of divine Providence, at the age of nearly six, John was rescued from immediate death by one man leaping on the shoulders of others, and lifting him out of his bedroom window, only a few minutes before the burning roof fell in. This remarkable deliverance is commemorated on two or three of his portraits, and in a large painting

by the late Mr. Parker of Newcastle. The artist in the latter instance has by mistake placed Epworth Church on the right of the rectory house; it should have been on the left. Many times during his long life Mr. Wesley referred to his narrow escape from death by quoting the Scripture passage, "Is not this a brand plucked out of the burning?"

It is worthy of note, how often, and in what various ways, Mr. Wesley was, during his long life, delivered from peril and death. His marvellous escape from the burning rectory-house made a deep impression on the mind of his mother, who resolved to pay special attention to his moral and religious training, and to watch the designs of divine Providence concerning him. This fact she names under date of 17th May, 1711, in her manuscript meditations. The effect of this special care was soon seen, and it induced so much seriousness in the boy, that he was admitted by his father to partake of the Lord's Supper, in Epworth Church, in 1711, when he was only eight years old.

He did not escape the usual ailments of children, and in April, 1712, he had the small-pox, with four of his sisters; of this his mother said in a letter to his father, "Jack bore his disease bravely, like a man, and, indeed, a Christian, without any complaint."

In 1714, he was sent from home to the Charterhouse School, in London, and although only eleven years old, it is an undoubted fact, that from that early age, and for seventy-six years following, he hardly ever knew what home was; his whole career was one of ceaseless activity and work; excepting the two years he was curate to his father at Epworth, he had no permanent home. Work day by day and every day was his lot, from the time he left home to go to school. At the Charterhouse School he soon attained proficiency in classical and other learning, and during his residence there he gave evidence of his disposition to organise, instruct, and direct, which developed such wonderful results in after years. In 1719, his elder brother, Samuel, then an usher in the Westminster School, assisted John in his classical studies; and writing home to his father he said, "My brother Jack gives you no manner of discouragement for breeding your third son (Charles) a scholar." In a later letter he added, "Jack is with me, a brave boy, learning Hebrew as fast as he can." His success in acquiring knowledge opened his way to the university, and in 1720

he was elected to Christ Church, Oxford, where, at the age of seventeen, he commenced that career of usefulness and learning which terminated only with his life. His letters home to his sisters at that period, and to others, indicate that he was a youth gay and sprightly, with a turn for wit and humour, and occasionally satire.

In a letter he wrote to his mother, when he was twenty-one, he manifested his ambition for acquiring wider knowledge, and asked that he might accompany her on a visit to London; but neither of them went at that time; there was more serious occupation for him at Oxford. He was only twenty-two when, on 19th September, 1725, after most careful and prayerful preparation, he was ordained deacon by Dr. John Potter, Bishop of Oxford. On 17th March, 1726, his success in study, his excellent scholarship, and his efficiency as a teacher in the University, recommended him for election to his first University distinction; on that day he was chosen a Fellow of Lincoln College, to the great delight of his parents and friends. He was then extremely orderly, systematic, and methodical; and, aiming at higher attainments, he drew up a scheme of studies, which, for some years, guided his mental path. On 7th November, 1726, he was chosen Greek Lecturer and Moderator of the classes at Oxford—a singular mark of esteem and confidence in his ability.

On 15th February, 1727, he took his degree of Master of Arts.

In August, 1727, being in deacon's orders, he became his father's curate, taking charge chiefly of the parish of Wroote, with occasional visits to Epworth.

During the summer of 1728, he returned to Oxford; and on Sunday, 22nd September, he was ordained priest by Bishop Potter, and immediately afterwards returned to Lincolnshire.

About the year 1729, when John Wesley was a Fellow of Lincoln College, he travelled many miles to visit an eminent Christian, who, in the course of conversation, said to him: "Sir, you wish to serve God and go to heaven; remember that you cannot serve Him alone; you must, therefore, either find companions or make them,—the Bible knows nothing of solitary religion." In making this record, Henry Moore, his biographer, says he never forgot that advice, and, on his return to the University, he at once spoke to his brother, and to Messrs.

Morgan, Hervey, Whitefield, and others, and thus began the meetings which led to their being first called Methodists.

On 16th June, 1729, he again visited Oxford; and on 22nd November he settled himself there and began to take pupils, the remuneration from which greatly assisted him in his work. In November, the same year, John and Charles Wesley, Mr. Morgan, and Mr. Kirkman commenced that systematic course of religious life which induced other young Oxonians to designate them "Methodists." This was the first origin of the Society so called.

The Wesleys began to visit the prisoners in the castle and the sick poor in Oxford in 1730, a duty and privilege which they continued in London, Bristol, and elsewhere nearly sixty years. The severe studies and discipline the brothers Wesley imposed upon themselves induced illness in John, which his mother attributed mainly to his wearing his hair flowing over his shoulders in natural curls. This practice he defended, and continued to wear his hair in that manner for many years afterwards. All his early portraits show his long flowing hair in curls; even after he was sixty years old, it was still his adornment.

The rector of Epworth, whilst on a visit to London, 5th January, 1732, ran down to Oxford to learn from personal inquiry "what his sons were doing." Writing to Mrs. Wesley at the above date, he says he was "well paid both for my expense and labour by the shining piety of our two sons." John Wesley walked to Epworth twice during this year. The second time was to meet his brother Samuel and his sisters at a family gathering, just previous to going to reside permanently at Tiverton. That was the last time the family met together. In 1735 that distinguished household was finally broken up.

John Wesley first visited London in 1732, and formed some friendships which, years afterwards, were of much service to him in his evangelistic work. On 21st September, 1733, he commenced the habit of reading on horseback, which he continued with immense personal advantage about half a century. He records in his diary, that within the year 1733 he walked about one thousand and fifty miles, attended to his studies, and preached constantly on the Lord's day.

The year 1735 was an ever-memorable one to the Wesley family, for, on 25th April, the rector died, and all the members were dispersed.

John Wesley was with his father during his last days, and, speaking to him shortly before he expired, the rector said, "The inward witness, son, the inward witness, that is the proof, the strongest proof of Christianity." Shortly afterwards he said to John, "God does chasten me with pain, but I thank Him for all, I bless Him for all, I love Him for all." In recording these words, John Wesley acknowledges that he did not then know what his father meant by the inward witness; so he tried to learn its meaning, and, when he understood that vital doctrine, he was never tired of teaching and enforcing it. John Wesley was urged to apply for the living at Epworth, but he could not see the way clear to do so; God was even then opening for him and his brother Charles a way of which they had previously no conception. General James Oglethorpe had just previously founded a colony in Georgia, in South America, and he was then in London, arranging for a large number of emigrants, Germans chiefly, to sail to that colony. John Wesley was taken out as a missionary, and Charles Wesley went as secretary to General Oglethorpe. They sailed from England 14th October, 1735, and arrived in America 6th February, 1736. Heavy trials and cruel treatment were their lot; but, after a time, Charles was sent back to England with despatches from the General, and he escaped his persecutors. John Wesley also fled from America, sailed on 22nd January, 1738, and arrived in England on 17th February. John Wesley reported that one of his chief trials was that he was not permitted to go out amongst the Indians as a missionary. On the day he landed in England, he wrote, amongst other things, "During the two years and almost four months since I left my native country to teach the Georgian Indians the nature of Christianity, what have I learned myself? Why, that I, who went to America to convert others, was never myself converted to God."

His conversion took place very soon afterwards. Charles Wesley was converted on 21st May, 1738, and John Wesley enjoyed the same experience three days afterwards at a meeting held near Aldersgate Street, London, 24th May, 1738, about nine o'clock in the evening, whilst one was reading Luther's preface to the Romans. Full of his new and joyous experience, and desiring to know more of the practical working of the new doctrine he had learned of Peter Böhler and other

Germans, of justification by faith in Jesus, he paid a visit to the Moravian settlement at Hernhutt, and returned to London a wiser and better man. His preaching daily in various places was marked by marvellous manifestations of the power of the Holy Spirit to convince and convert his hearers. The preaching of the new-found doctrine of justification so alarmed and aroused the clergy, that all the churches in London were closed against both the brothers Wesley. But to remain silent with men so full of zeal and love for souls was impossible; consequently, following the example of Mr. Whitefield, John Wesley preached his first sermon in the open air at Bristol, 2nd April, 1739. He published the first Hymn-book for use amongst his hearers in the early part of that year; he gathered the first meeting together of his converts, and then commenced the Methodist Society. During the summer of that year, he had preached to out-door congregations at Bristol and in London numbering ten, fourteen, and even twenty thousand people. In Bristol, in 1739, he encountered and confounded the notorious wit and scoffer, Beau Nash.

In 1741, Mr. Wesley finally separated from the Moravians: and the same year, he and Mr. Whitefield, after a friendly interview, agreed to separate, as they differed so widely in their views of the Gospel; Mr. Whitefield taking Calvin's views, and Mr. Wesley the views of Arminius; one preached election and predestination, the other justification by faith, and grace free for all, or universal redemption. The separation lasted many years, but they were afterwards reconciled in 1765, and were most friendly; when Mr. Whitefield died, John Wesley preached his funeral sermon in both the Tabernacles belonging to Mr. Whitefield, in London.

In June, 1742, Mr. Wesley, being refused permission to preach in Epworth Church, of which he might have been the rector had he chosen, he stood on his father's tomb, and preached to a large and delighted audience, amongst whom were some endeared friends and relations. Several times afterwards he preached standing on his father's tomb. The scene has been made memorable by numerous engravings, though not very accurate ones. On July 23rd, he witnessed the peaceful death of his mother, at the Foundry, in London; and on Sunday, 1st August, he buried all that was mortal of his

best earthly friend, in Bunhill Fields, and preached by the open grave to an innumerable company, on "the dead, small and great, who shall stand before God."

Mr. Wesley's itinerant labours, which commenced before he had formed any Society of his converts, began to extend to various parts of the country. He made a tour of Cornwall with John Nelson, and there laid foundations for vigorous Methodist societies, which have flourished there ever since. In 1743, he endured unheard-of persecutions at Wednesbury; but God brought both him and his brother Charles almost miraculously out of these fierce and terrible trials. In 1744, Mr. Wesley deemed it prudent to use his pen in defending his people against the attacks of ignorant writers in newspapers, he himself employing the same medium. Having published a small tract, "The Character of a Methodist," and the Rules of his Societies, and now for once defended his people publicly by the press, he left that kind of work for the future either to others or to God. When assailed by Toplady, he left his defence to Thomas Olivers; when the Antinomian controversy raged against him, John Fletcher came to the rescue. When on another occasion it was known that he was to be assailed in the newspapers, Charles tried to prevail on his brother to remain in London and defend himself; but John promptly replied, that when he gave himself up to God and his great work, he did not reserve his character, but gave that also into God's keeping; so John left London, and his character came to no harm. Mr. Wesley made very free use of the press, but sparingly in defending himself.

During the year 1745, another great change took place in Mr. Wesley's views and opinions. He read through carefully Lord King's "Account of Primitive Christianity," and that work convinced him that there was as much validity in Presbyterian Orders as in those of the Church of England, or Rome. From that time all his High Church opinions were abandoned, and thenceforth he neither wrote nor published opinions which previously he had thought of vital importance, but which now and to the end of his life he opposed in every possible way. Believing himself to be as fully qualified as any bishop to ordain others to the office and work of the ministry, at a later period he ordained nearly a dozen of his preachers to administer the Sacraments, and to do

all such other religious duties as are usually considered to pertain to ministers duly ordained. All Mr. Wesley's High Church opinions vanished before Lord King's facts and arguments, and ever afterwards he was as firm a Presbyterian as he had previously been an Episcopalian.

In 1746, the Moravians, hearing that his views were changed in some matters respecting the Established Church, tried to win over Mr. Wesley to their community. His reply to them is in these words: "I must insist on the right of private judgment. I cannot yield either implicit faith or obedience to any man, or number of men, under heaven."

The subject of marriage had occupied John Wesley's serious attention on three or four occasions. When, through the interference of his brother Charles, he was deprived of Grace Murray, whom he had intended to marry, he determined not to ask his brother's advice again on that question, but early in 1751 he alarmed Charles by telling him "he was resolved to marry." Having formed an acquaintance with Mrs. Vazeille, a widow lady of ample fortune, he stated his intention to his friend the Rev. Vincent Perronet, who encouraged him in his purpose. Strangely enough, Mr. Wesley met the single young men at the Foundry, by invitation, just at that time, and advised those of them who could to "remain single for the kingdom of heaven's sake."

On Sunday, 10th February, 1751, walking over London Bridge, Mr. Wesley slipped on the ice and fell, spraining his ankle. A surgeon bound up his leg, and he preached in West Street Chapel, hoping to preach in the evening at the Foundry; but the pain was so severe, he was carried to Mrs. Vazeille's residence in Threadneedle Street. Here he rested seven days, chiefly in writing a Hebrew Grammar. On Sunday, 17th February, he was carried to the Foundry, and preached kneeling. Either on the Monday or Tuesday following, he was married to Mrs. Vazeille, a lady seven years younger than himself. Mr. Wesley was forty-eight, his bride forty-one years old. On the day of his marriage, and the day following, he preached in London on his knees, being still unable to stand. A fortnight afterwards he was not able to walk, but started on his journey to Bristol.

Mr. Wesley was not happy in his choice of a wife. They lived together nearly twenty years, but not harmoniously. They carried on

a protracted correspondence, the writer having seen and read many of their letters, most of which were friendly enough, and prove that Mrs. Wesley was a good business woman, and assisted in managing the book affairs at the Foundry. On 23rd January, 1771, she left the Foundry during his absence from London, and she never afterwards returned; on which event Mr. Wesley remarks, "Non eam reliqui: non dimisi: non revocabo." She left him, was not dismissed, and was not recalled. She lived more than ten years afterwards, and died at Camberwell, 8th October, 1781, and was buried in the churchyard of that parish on Friday, 12th October. Mr. Wesley returned to London just in time to be informed that Mrs. Wesley had been interred that afternoon at Camberwell. She left two children by her former husband, to whom Mr. Wesley showed marked kindness during his lifetime, and did not forget them in his will. The descendants of both these daughters were honourably connected with Methodism: the mother of Dr. W. W. Stamp being one of them, and Mrs. Sundius, late of Stoke Newington, another. Many of Mrs. Wesley's letters to her husband are still preserved. For forty years a stone marked the place of her interment; but owing to public improvements, that portion of the churchyard was many years ago taken to widen the highway, so that Mrs. Wesley's grave and stone have both disappeared.

In 1753, a serious illness overtook Mr. Wesley, which he resisted as long as he could; but his physician, Dr. Fothergill, ordered immediate rest, change, fresh air, and gentle exercise. This he found at the Hotwells, Bristol; but instead of resting, he wrote his "Notes on the Bible." He was apprehensive that his end was near, and thinking he might be eulogised after his death, wrote his own Epitaph as follows: "Here lieth the body of John Wesley, a brand plucked out of the burning, who died of a consumption in the fifty-first year of his age, not leaving, after his debts are paid, ten pounds behind him; praying, God be merciful to me an unprofitable sinner." He had another attack of illness in 1757, but with care he rallied, and entered on a career of travelling, preaching, writing, and printing absolutely unparalleled.

In March, 1758, Mr. Wesley rode ninety miles in one day, and in August, 1767, he travelled 110 miles in one day. In June he attended

the learned and sanctified Thomas Walsh on his deathbed, wondering why a man possessed of gifts and graces of such high excellence should be snatched away so early. During the same month he preached to a colony of Germans in Ireland, known as the Palatinates. Soon afterwards part of them emigrated to America, and from amongst them originated the first Methodist Society in New York, with Barbara Heck as the directing spirit, and Philip Embury as the first preacher. From that little spark, see how great a fire is kindled on that vast continent! Mr. Wesley's consumptive symptoms again returned, but they were turned aside by divine Providence. In December he had a painful contention with James Wheatley, one of his preachers at Norwich, and with his congregation. Rather than have strife, he let both preacher and people leave him, and he soon raised another society in that city which was more true to Methodism.

In June, 1759, Mr. Wesley preached at Sunderland against smuggling, which he had done before, and expelled non-complying members. In October he sought to relieve the sufferings of the French prisoners near Bristol. In November, he preached in Mr. Berridge's church at Everton, after which he records in his Journal his views on visions and trances, observing that God sometimes reveals His will to man by such means.

In 1760, Mr. Wesley began to give his thoughtful and serious attention to the doctrine of holiness, or sanctification, or Christian perfection. Previously, during his public ministry, he had inquired carefully into the lives and experience of those members in his societies who professed to enjoy that great blessing, without finding anything to object to or oppose. In 1749, he selected some stanzas from the two volumes in his brother's "Psalms and Hymns," published in that year, which clearly embodied that deep Christian experience, and he gave particular prominence to them by publishing them in a pamphlet, and by quoting them in his sermons. In May, 1741, he met with one who enjoyed that experience, and he mentioned the case to his friend and instructor, Peter Böhler, who assured him that such experience was not attainable on this side heaven. That bold and dangerous statement seems to have in some way created so much caution in Mr. Wesley's mind, that he took great pains to investigate the cases of

such happy experience; sometimes he advised and instructed those who were thus blessed, but he never opposed or discredited their testimony. Indeed it was to a large extent the preaching and attaining to the experience of perfect love that made much of the success of the ministry of the early Methodist preachers.

To follow the busy itinerant evangelist from place to place would be impossible in this limited record. The following may be taken as examples of the work of many years. An example of Mr. Wesley's readiness and willingness to work for Christ he records under date of 4th May, 1761. Walking in the quadrangle to see the hall of King's College, in Old Aberdeen, he saw a company of ladies and gentlemen, who seemed to be conversing together. At length one of the gentlemen said to Mr. Wesley, "We came last night to the College Close, but could not hear you, and should be extremely obliged if you will give us a short discourse here." Without delay Mr. Wesley preached a short sermon to them from "God was in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself."

Visiting Ireland in July, 1762, Mr. Wesley records: "I found three or four and forty in Dublin who seemed to enjoy the pure love of God. At least forty of these had been set at liberty within four months. Some others who had received the same blessing had removed to other parts. A larger number had found remission of sins." In the summer he was in the west of England, where he writes: "15th September.—The more I converse with the believers in Cornwall, the more I am convinced that they have sustained great loss for want of hearing the doctrine of Christian perfection clearly and strongly enforced. I see, wherever this is not done, believers grow dead and cold. This can be prevented by keeping up in them an hourly expectation of being perfected in love."

Under date of 7th July, 1764, Mr. Wesley, on arriving at Manchester, writes: "I preached in the evening with difficulty, my voice being weak. I had preached three times a-day for ten days, and many of the times out of doors." Seeing some of the members in prosperous circumstances, he writes: "I gave all our brethren a solemn warning not to love the world nor the things of the world. This is one way whereby Satan will surely try to overthrow the work of God.

Riches swiftly increase on many Methodists: if they set their hearts upon them, the life of God vanishes away." This warning cry he raised repeatedly in Bristol, London, and other large societies, seeing how many who became rich either misappropriated their wealth or departed from Christ.

In March, 1770, Mr. Wesley records his experience, extending over thirty years, that by riding with a slack rein, only two instances occurred of his horse falling or stumbling. He rode, reading, with the reins loose on his horse's neck; and in that way he had ridden on horseback more than 100,000 miles, reading constantly by day. In September he preached in Gwennap Pit to 20,000 persons. On a subsequent occasion he had at the same place 22,000 persons. In October, by desire of the Bristol Society, John and Charles Wesley agreed to administer the Lord's Supper in that city every other Sunday. In November, by desire of Mr. Whitefield's friends, Mr. Wesley preached at Tottenham Court Road Chapel, and at the Tabernacle, Moorfields, a funeral sermon for that prince of preachers. During the same year Mr. Wesley prepared and published what is known as the "Large Minutes."

The only incident in Mr. Wesley's life during the year 1775, of more than ordinary interest, is one of severe illness. During a tour in Ireland, he slept out of doors with his face to the ground, in Mr. Lark's orchard, Cockhill, in the hot weather; which he says he had been accustomed to do for forty years without ever being injured by it. He was slow to admit that old age had arrived; he was now seventy-two, and thought by struggling against the first symptoms of the fever by reading, preaching, journeying, and diversion, to throw off the effects. He was this time disappointed; the fever increased upon him, under the influence of which he was insensible for some days, but prayer was made for him, the dangerous symptoms passed away, and he recovered with extraordinary rapidity, and resumed his labours. He was at Derry-Aghy, near Lisburn, when the illness set in worst, and his attached friend, Joseph Bradford, was with him and attended to his wants. Joseph Bradford's faithful services were ever appreciated by Mr. Wesley. During the same year, Mr. Wesley published his "Calm Address to the American Colonies," then at war with England. His friends wondered

why he sent out that tract. In reply, he said he did it, "not to get money, nor preferment, nor to please any man living, nor to inflame any; but to contribute my mite to try and put out the flame which rages all over the land."

In 1776, an order was issued by the Government to all persons suspected to have silver plate on which duty was not paid. His Majesty's Commissioners of Excise sent one of these orders to Mr. Wesley, requiring an immediate return of all the silver plate he had. Mr. Wesley replied at once; and on the back of the original order he wrote a copy of his reply. It is dated May, 1766, and is as follows:—

"Sir,—I have two silver teaspoons at London, and two at Bristol. This is all the plate which I have at present, and I shall not buy any more while so many around me want bread.—I am, sir, your most humble Servant, John Wesley."

On 28th June of this year, Mr. Wesley wrote thus: "I am seventy-three years old, and far abler to preach than I was at twenty-three. What natural means has God used to produce so wonderful an effect? First, continual exercise and change of air by travelling about four thousand miles in a year; second, rising at four every morning; third, the ability to sleep at will; fourth, the never losing a night's sleep in my life; fifth, two violent fevers and two deep consumptions (these were rough medicines, but they caused my flesh to come again as the flesh of a little child); lastly, evenness of temper. I feel and grieve, but, by the grace of God, I fret at nothing. God doeth this in answer to many prayers."

Such was the spirit and disposition of the man who more than any other moulded the religious and social life of the eighteenth century. Here is a brief extract from a letter he wrote to a friend in 1777: "Though I am always in haste, I am never in a hurry. I never undertake more work than I can go through with calmness of spirit. I travel four or five thousand miles a-year on horseback, chiefly reading, yet I find time to visit the rich and the poor, and I must do it if I believe in the Bible: these are the marks by which the Great Shepherd of Israel will know his sheep." How many a valuable life has been cut short between the ages of forty and sixty, which, by the observance of Mr. Wesley's rule, might have been spared till seventy!

In the same year he laid the foundation stone of the City Road Chapel, which was opened by him 1st November, 1778. In January of that year he began the issue of the *Arminian Magazine*, which has been published every month since, under the title now of the *Wesleyan Methodist Magazine*. On 9th August, 1779, Mr. Wesley preached for the last time in the Old Foundry, Moorfields, which had been the London home of the Methodist Societies for just forty years.

Two occurrences in the year 1780 require to be noticed. Some friends had written to Mr. Wesley desiring him to select a young man of piety, wisdom, and understanding, and send him out to America, ordained by one of the English bishops. Having a personal knowledge of Dr. Lowth, Bishop of London, Mr. Wesley asked this favour of him, and was refused. Thereupon, on 10th August, he wrote a long letter to the bishop, pointing out to him the great evil he had done to spiritual religion in America by that refusal. Before finishing his letter, Mr. Wesley thus plainly writes his mind: "Your lordship did not see good to ordain [the pious young man I recommended], but your lordship did see good to ordain and send into America other persons who knew something of Greek and Latin, but knew no more of saving souls than of catching whales. In this respect I mourn for poor America." Driven by stern necessity, Mr. Wesley, aided by two of his own curates, who were ordained clergymen, himself ordained and set apart Dr. Coke in 1784 to go to America and undertake the duties which the people asked to have performed. Out of this action arose the Methodist Episcopal Church in America, with its staff of Presbyterian ordained bishops, its universities, colleges, and schools, and with an extended agency for spreading the Gospel, which is far outstripping the Episcopalian ordained clergy in the value and extent of its spiritual labours. If Bishop Lowth was both blind and deaf to the call of divine Providence to help in that work, John Wesley both saw and heard the call of God, and he acted with decision and energy; though he did not wish to grieve the English Church by using the word "bishop," so he desired the Americans to use the word "superintendent." This they did for a time, but by common consent they adopted the former, and ordained bishops are now doing in America as effectively the good work in the Methodist Church as the Episco-

palian ordained bishops are in England. Which ordination is most valid? By their fruits let both be judged righteously.

The second event of importance in 1780 was the publishing of the collection of "Hymns for the People called Methodists." This volume, so carefully and judiciously prepared, has continued to be used by the United Societies in England and on the mission stations for over one hundred years. Eternity only can reveal the extent of the blessings which that book has conferred on the people of God.

Part of the months of June and July, 1783, Mr. Wesley passed most pleasantly in Holland, having been invited to that country by Mr. Ferguson, a friend of his who had removed thither from the City Road Society in London. In 1786, he again visited that country, the former visit having made him many friends in all classes of society, who desired to renew their acquaintance with the venerable preacher. In November he paid a visit to his friend, Mr. Perronet, of Shoreham. On that occasion he makes this remark: "In the year 1769 I weighed one hundred and twenty-two pounds: in the year 1783 I weighed not a pound more nor a pound less. I doubt if another such instance is to be found in Great Britain."

On 28th February, 1784, Mr. Wesley enrolled his Deed of Declaration, by which the legal continuance of Methodism and the Methodist Conference is secured in perpetuity. The Deed is printed in detail in Whitehead's "Life of Wesley" (vol. ii.)., under date. It was further confirmed at the Conference of 1785. Several preachers whose names were not included in the hundred named in the Deed as the first legal hundred, tried to divide the societies on the question, but instead of that they divided themselves from Methodism. Travelling in Scotland, on 10th May, Mr. Wesley walked twelve miles, at the age of eighty-two, without any sense of fatigue. In September of that year, Mr. Wesley wrote the letter to the American Methodists which determined them in electing to become an Episcopal Church, with bishops and deacons; Dr. Coke and Francis Asbury being their first bishops. This was finally determined by the Conference held at Baltimore, in December, 1784. Mr. Asbury was consecrated a bishop, 27th December, 1784.

Here is an interesting extract from Mr. Wesley's Journal: "Sunday, 12th September,—I hastened to Kingswood, and preached under

the shade of that double row of trees which I planted about forty years ago. The sun shone as hot as it used to do in Georgia, but his rays could not pierce our canopy; in the meantime the Lord shone upon many souls, and refreshed them that were weary." Though an old man of fourscore years, his preaching had lost none of its power or attraction.

At the Conference of 1788, Mr. Wesley had a long conversation respecting the Church, and the relation of Methodism thereto. He shows that in all the points in which they varied from the Church, they had done it out of necessity,—not from choice,—slowly and warily, point by point. "We did none of these things,—out-door preaching, extempore prayer, forming societies, holding conferences, and employing lay-preachers, till we were convinced we could no longer omit them." From that Conference he issued the first Address to the Societies. This Annual Address now forms an important feature in the Conference proceedings. His brother Charles died during that year.

On 1st January, 1790, Mr. Wesley wrote thus: "I am now an old man, decayed from head to foot. My eyes are dim, my right hand shakes; but I can preach and write still." On 14th February, West Street Chapel was filled with little children, to whom he preached once more. During the year he makes various entries in his journals and letters to indicate how much he feels his natural force abated. During this year the General Minutes from 1744 to 1789 were published. On 16th March he wrote his last sermon. On 7th October he preached at Winchelsea, for the last time in the open air. On 24th October, he made the last entry in his Journal, with some affecting reflections.

In 1791, Mr. Wesley commenced the year visiting places in and near London, preaching as usual, and meeting the society afterwards, exhorting them to love as brethren, fear God, and honour the King. His latest services he usually concluded by having the following verse sung:—

> "Oh that without a lingering groan
> I may the welcome word receive;
> My body with my charge lay down,
> And cease at once to work and live."

How literally his wishes in that respect were fulfilled, is well known by his closing days on earth.

In February he prepared for his spring journey to Ireland, and sent his carriage and horses to Bristol to await his coming. The sequel showed that he had taken his last earthly journey. On 17th February he preached at Lambeth, on the 18th at Chelsea, and on the 19th he had to ask his friend, Robert Carr Brackenbury, to preach for him at City Road Chapel. On Sunday, 20th February, he was unwell at home, and had two sermons read to him. On the 21st he dined at Twickenham with Miss Wesley and Miss Ritchie; on the 22nd he dined with Mr. John Horton at Islington, and preached in the evening at City Road Chapel for the last time. On the 23rd he visited one of his friends at Leatherhead, with Mr. James Rogers, and preached in the dining-room of his friend's house. That was his last sermon. 24th February, he spent with his friend Mr. George Wolff at Balham, and there he wrote his famous letter to Wilberforce against slavery. On the 25th Mrs. Wolff drove him to his own house in the City Road, from which he came out no more alive. Saturday, the 26th, was spent chiefly in sleep.

Sunday, 27th February.—Changed for the worse; Miss Ritchie and Mr. Bradford constantly in attendance. The latter wrote to a few of the preachers in London the following laconic letter, dated from City Road: "Mr. Wesley is very ill; pray, pray, pray." Prayers were indeed made that day for him.

Monday, 28th, his weakness increased. He said during the day, "There is no way into the holiest but by the blood of Jesus."

Tuesday, 1st March.—He sang two verses; then tried to write, but could not. Miss Ritchie asked to write for him. He replied, "God is with us." He then sang the verse commencing, "I 'll praise my Maker while I 've breath." Later in the day he repeated twice, "The best of all is, God is with us." In the course of that day, and during the night following, he gave expression to nearly a score of short sentences indicating his reliance on God and his great peace of mind.

Wednesday, 2nd March.—A few minutes before ten o'clock in the morning he faintly said, "Farewell, farewell!" and without a sigh or groan, whilst Joseph Bradford was repeating the words, "Lift up your heads, O ye gates," &c., the spirit was released, and he calmly fell on sleep, as peacefully as an infant slumbers. Eight endeared friends

were standing round his bed when he expired; immediately the spirit was gone, they united in singing the hymn commencing,—

> "Waiting to receive thy spirit,
> Lo, the Saviour stands above."

Just as he expired, his nephew, Samuel Wesley, was knocking at the door for admission; he entered the house whilst the hymn of release was being sung. John Wesley was in his eighty-eighth year.

His body lay in state one day in the chapel at City Road; his face had a sweet smile upon it, which thousands noticed and admired. He was interred in the ground behind the chapel, at five in the morning of 9th March, by torchlight. A vast crowd gathered on the occasion; it was a solemn service. At ten the same morning Dr. Whitehead preached a funeral sermon for him.

In 1828 his coffin was found to be decayed; so the body was enclosed in a strong oak case, with his portrait framed on the lid, and then placed in a stone sarcophagus, there to await the resurrection of the just. Ample details of his life, work, death, and funeral will be found in the "History of City Road Chapel."

The following brief summary of his character will be read with interest, and it contains much worthy of the widest imitation as far as possible:—

"His figure was remarkable. He was low of stature, only five feet five and a-half inches high, and his habit of body in every period of his life the reverse of corpulent, and expressive of strict temperance and continual exercise. His step was firm, vigorous and muscular. His face was one of the finest ever seen. A clear, smooth forehead, an aquiline nose, an eye the brightest and most piercing that can be conceived, and a freshness of complexion scarcely ever to be found at his years, and expression of the most perfect health, conspired to render him a venerable and interesting figure. Few have seen him without being struck with his appearance, and many who have been greatly prejudiced against him have been known to change their opinion the moment they were introduced into his presence.

"In his countenance and demeanour there was a cheerfulness mingled with gravity; a sprightliness which was the natural result of an unusual flow of spirits, and yet was accompanied with every mark of the most serene tranquillity.

"His aspect, particularly on profile, which varied on the two sides, has a strong character of acuteness and penetration. In dress he was the pattern of neatness and simplicity. A narrow plaited stock, coat, with a small upright collar, no buckles at his knees, no silk or velvet in any part of his apparel, and a head (in old age) as white as

snow, gave an idea of something primitive and apostolic, while an air of neatness and cleanliness was diffused over his whole person."

This is a picture to linger over. And of such a man we may well ask, What was his manner of life? Beyond all men of his day he was a busy man, but never a hurried man. If ever a person took things coolly, Wesley did. In the midst of the greatest cares and anxieties and labours he was calm. As a student, a preacher, a writer, an editor, an organiser, he stood in the front rank. He was a man far in advance of his age. He stood on the hill-tops of thought, and cast his searching glances over the heads of the multitude far into the future. He planted in his poor and despised Methodism the germs of great benevolent enterprises which have astonished and blessed the civilised world, and cast the light of truth over the nations that sit in the shadows of death.

Mr. Buckle has declared him to be "the first of theological statesmen." Lord Macaulay placed his genius for government on a level with that of Richelieu. Dr. Johnson called him Plato. Dr. Southey said, "I consider him the most influential mind of the last century—the man who will have produced the greatest effects, centuries or perhaps millenniums hence, if the present race of men should continue so long." "He devoted all his powers," says Macaulay, "in defiance of obloquy and derision, to what he sincerely considered the highest good of his species." And Buckle declares concerning this high eulogy, which is not quoted in full, "that strongly as it is expressed, it will searcely appear an exaggeration to those who have compared the success of Wesley with his difficulties." What was the secret spring of such a life? *Entire consecration to one work.* He never faltered, never turned aside for a single moment. From the evening in May, 1738, to the day of his triumphant death in 1791, he was a man of one work.

Charles Wesley, A.M., the Poet of Methodism.

[*Born*, 1707: *Entered the Ministry*, 1735: *Died*, 1788.]

HE lived through fourscore years; and when he died, he left to the Church of Christ on earth a precious legacy of more than 6500 gospel hymns. That, in a few words, is the record of Charles Wesley's life; and when he died, his brother John thought he was so widely known in England, that his record in the Minutes of Conference in 1788 consists of only eight lines, describing his incomparable excellence as a writer of hymns. Owing to the burning of the Epworth Rectory and all its contents, 9th February, 1709, there exists no written statement of his birth or baptism; and owing to that fact, Charles himself did not know his own age when he was sixty; he, and John, and Martha Wesley all differed as to his age, and it was not till about 1848 that the difficulty was cleared up. In a letter giving an account of the fire to the Duke of Buckingham, the rector says, "The nurse carried the youngest child out of the burning house, because he could not go;" and further on he adds, "I hope my wife, being near her confinement, will not miscarry, but that God will give me my nineteenth child." Mrs. Wesley gave birth to her nineteenth child, Keziah, in March, 1709, the month after the fire. The boy baby, rescued by the nurse, was thirteen months old when the fire occurred, and his birth-day was 18th December, 1707.

Charles Wesley was the eighteenth child of his parents, and as

Dr. Whitehead informs us, "was prematurely born, several weeks before his time; he appeared dead rather than alive when he was born. He did not cry, nor open his eyes, and was kept wrapt up in soft wool until the time when he should have been born in the usual course of nature, and then he opened his eyes and cried." Dr. Whitehead, who makes this statement, knew Charles Wesley intimately, attended him in his last illness, and till he died; he knew also both John and Martha Wesley, and had undoubted authority for the particulars here stated.

Commencing to learn at the age of five years, in 1712 he entered his mother's school, and commenced that systematic course of mental discipline which laid the groundwork of his after success in academic pursuits. It has been recorded that Mrs. Wesley, when she resumed her educational duties in the new rectory-house, added to her programme the singing of one or more of the Psalms. The voice of melody is seldom lost on the mind of the young, and how much that new duty contributed to produce the love of poetry and psalmody, which in so marked a manner characterised both John and Charles Wesley in after years, would be impossible to tell. Praise formed a prominent feature in the Wesley family: it smoothed their passage to the skies at the end of their earthly pilgrimage; and for both John Wesley and his mother, a Psalm of praise and thanksgiving was sung directly the spirit took its flight to heaven. When Charles Wesley joined his mother's school he had his five elder sisters and his brother John for companions. Here he was trained to those "habits of regularity, diligence, order, self-denial, honesty, benevolence, seriousness, and devotion," which under the guidance of the Holy Spirit rewarded the toil of his pious and accomplished preceptress.

With quick and lively perceptions, and an aptness to learn, Charles soon acquired as much elementary knowledge, general and classical, under his parents, as fitted him for more advanced studies. His eldest brother, Samuel, knowing the straitened circumstances of his father, sent for Charles to Westminster, before the boy had completed eight years. He also undertook to defray the cost of his education there, leaving to his father the duty of providing his child with clothing. The necessities of home made the indulgence of pocket-money all but a continuous impossibility. Charles entered Westminster School in

REVEREND CHARLES WESLEY. A.M.

Thomas C. Jack. London & Edinburgh.

1716. His sprightly disposition aided his natural aptness to acquire knowledge. Although possessing only a feeble constitution, yet his occasional buoyancy of spirit, and his great courage, obtained for him the title of Captain of the School, which position he had first to earn by his skill in fighting. A Scotch boy, who entered the school after him, suffered much ill-treatment from the boys because his father had favoured the Pretender. The boy was James Murray, who afterwards became the great Lord Mansfield: when both had risen to deserved distinction, they renewed the intimacy which they first formed by their juvenile battles.

The progress which Charles Wesley made in his studies recommended him to the authorities of the school, by whom he was admitted as one of the King's Scholars, and his expenses were borne by the Foundation. This took place in 1721. Although he was the first, he was not the only Wesley who attained that position.

The name of Wesley had been prominently before the public for about half-a-century, when, on 28th September, 1728, Garrett Wesley, Esq., of Dangan, in Ireland, M.P. for the county of Meath, died without leaving issue. Charles Wesley was at that time under his brother's care and tuition at Westminster. An application was made to the rector of Epworth some time previously to know if he had a son named Charles, and if so, was he willing that he should become the heir of Garrett Wesley, of Dangan. Charles was nearly of age, and he preferred to leave the decision of this important matter to his father. The responsibility of deciding was ultimately left with Charles, who was visited at Westminster by some one from Ireland, who it is believed was Garrett Wesley himself, and who tried to prevail on Charles to accept the heirship. Charles ultimately declined the offer, preferring to remain in England; but some one sent money to Westminster for several years to pay for his education. Failing to secure a scion of the Epworth family, Garrett Wesley left all his estates to Richard Colley, Esq., a more distant relative than Charles Wesley, on condition that he should assume the surname and arms of Wesley. This he did; and Richard Colley, Wesley's heir, in 1747 was created by George II. the first Lord Mornington, and he became the grandfather of Arthur, Duke of Wellington, as is shown in the pedigree of the

family published in "Memorials of the Wesley Family." John Wesley, many years afterwards, wrote concerning his brother's decision: "It was a fair escape." Providence directed all this; for had he accepted the Irish offer, Methodism would have had no poet, and the English nation would have had no Arthur, Duke of Wellington. Immense issues depended on that boy's choice; and yet there is no evidence that Charles Wesley ever regretted the choice he then made.

Charles Wesley remained five years a Foundation Scholar; and at the age of nineteen he was elected to Christ Church College, Oxford. At that time, 1726, he was strictly moral, but not religious. John had been ordained, and was then his father's curate, Charles being alone at Oxford, diligent as a student. By the time he was twenty-two, he had become so remarkable for diligence and devotion as to be styled, by some of his college friends, "Methodist." In one of his letters, Charles says the name was given in 1729, because he and a few friends who joined him observed with strict conformity the method for study and practice laid down by the statutes of the University; they were precise and regular in disposing of their time, in all their conduct, and in taking the Lord's Supper every week. Charles then began to write a journal, which he continued for fifty years. On coming of age, he took his B.A. degree, and became a college tutor; but his stipend was so small he had to ask his father to purchase clothes for him. John returned to Oxford in November, 1729, and both brothers remained at the University till their father died in 1735. They intended to continue in their tutorships; but General Oglethorpe engaged Charles as his secretary to accompany him to America, and he was ordained deacon, in the autumn of 1735, by Dr. Potter, Bishop of Oxford, and on the following Sunday he was ordained priest by Dr. Gibson, bishop of London. His trials in America made his life most unhappy; he arrived there in February, 1736, and was glad to escape in the following August, reaching Deal, in England, in December, bringing despatches to the London Committee of the Colony.

As secretary to the Committee of the Colony, during the year 1737 he attended several of their meetings, travelled much about England, and preached in several parts of the country, though at that time he had very defective views of saving truth.

By desire of the University of Oxford, Charles Wesley was requested to carry up their address and present the same to the King, which he did on 26th August, 1737, at Hampton Court, accompanied by a few friends. Charles was graciously received; the Archbishop said how glad he was to see *him* there. After kissing their majesties' hands, they were invited to join the royal party at dinner. The day following, Charles Wesley waited upon H.R.H. the Prince of Wales, and dined at St. James's Palace.

At that period Count Zinzendorf was in England, making arrangements for sending Moravian missionaries out to the colonies in Georgia and Carolina. Amongst the Moravians who had come to London was Peter Böhler, who was introduced to John Wesley, 7th February, 1738, and who procured lodgings for him and his two friends near to Mr. Hutton's, with whom Mr. Wesley was located. An intimacy sprang up between Böhler and the Wesleys, which, under the divine Spirit, led to the conversion of both John and Charles Wesley, and the consequent origin and growth of Methodism, and the spreading of Scriptural holiness throughout England. On 20th February, Charles Wesley began to teach Peter Böhler English, and in return Böhler taught Charles Wesley the plan of salvation by faith, which, within three months, became his happy personal experience.

A trying illness was the immediate preceding cause to the conversion of Charles Wesley. It was sudden and serious, so much so that it led to the doctor prohibiting his return to America, and it led also to the doctor saying he "had been within the jaws of death, but he was not suffered to shut his mouth upon him." His recovery was as sudden as his illness had been severe, but it was of short duration. On 28th April, 1738, his illness returned with great violence, and a skilful physician was called in. His prescriptions, though very carefully observed, did not produce a cure. Peter Böhler called, who had unintentionally been detained in England. His conversations and prayers convinced Charles Wesley that God was thus visiting him with affliction for his want of faith. Under date of 4th May, John Wesley wrote: "Peter Böhler left London for Carolina. Oh, what a work God has begun since his coming into England—such a one as shall never come to an end till heaven and earth pass away!" This utterance was pro-

phetic, but how true! How little did Mr. Wesley then know the vast extent of the work which had been commenced in their own minds within three months only! On Sunday (Whitsunday), 21st May, 1738, Charles Wesley obtained a conscious sense of pardon and adoption, and within three days John Wesley received the same blessing, justifying faith by believing on Jesus. Millions of souls have been benefited as the result of those two conversions in May, 1738.

For years Charles Wesley had been living and preaching a ceremonial and formal religion; from the time of his conversion the whole course of his life was changed, and whatever zeal he had manifested previously, from that period to the end of his long life, his diligence and earnest service in preaching the Gospel knew no limit excepting that of his own physical power.

The greatness of his zeal, and his untiring energy in preaching the Gospel, soon found him a sphere of usefulness as large as was the love in his heart for poor sinners. Whilst the churches remained open to him he accepted every invitation to preach, and he did so daily. When the churches were no longer accessible, he followed the example of Mr. Whitefield and his brother John, and preached out of doors to whatever audience his presence could command.

His sermons were simple, straight, direct appeals, spoken from the heart to the heart, without the waste of one superfluous word,—hence their extraordinary effect. His power, in short, was that not unfitly named "revivalist;" what men already held as an intellectual belief, he made them hold as a living, working reality.

In June, 1739, he was summoned to appear before the Archbishop of Canterbury, to answer the charge of preaching in churches to which he had no canonical or legal appointment. The Archbishop doubtless felt he had the worst of the argument; but, failing in this point, he diligently forbade any of the clergy to permit the Wesleys to preach in their churches. Thus, though the churches were closed, the Gospel was not bound; and after much prayer for divine direction, the Sunday following the Archbishop's interdiction, Charles Wesley went forth in the name of Jesus Christ, and commenced his open-air mission by preaching to 10,000 people in Moorfields, from the words, "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden; and I will give you rest."

The presence of God was so manifestly amongst them that all his doubts and scruples fled, and from that day Charles Wesley preached (regardless of canon or any other law) wheresoever he could get a congregation to hear him.

Mr. Wesley was not indifferent to Church order and discipline, but he was not bound by either when they interfered with the spread of the Gospel. Amongst the books in his library was one entitled "The Rubric in the Book of Common Prayer, and the Canons of the Church of England, &c. By Thomas Sharp, D.D.: London, 1753," 8vo, pp. 354. At the end, on a score of blank pages, Charles Wesley has written nine pages of additional items communicated to him by the author of that work, in his beautiful clear autograph; and following them are eight pages more of his elegant shorthand notes (John Byrom's system). The volume is in possession of the writer.

The Sunday following that on which he opened his commission in Moorfields, Charles Wesley preached in his course at St. Mary's, before the University at Oxford, on Justification by Faith:—the Vice-Chancellor of the University, the Dean of Christ's Church, and other leading dignitaries, all of whom objected to the irregularity of field-preaching. Charles Wesley was not convinced by their arguments. He returned to London, and on the Sunday morning following he preached at Moorfields to "about 10,000 people; and to twice that number in the afternoon on Kennington Common." The latter service involved him in an unrighteous lawsuit, and a loss of £19 16s. 6d. On the back of the indictment Charles Wesley wrote, "To be rejudged in that day."

Although Charles Wesley had been so long worn down by disease, and had from the time of his ordination, to some time after his conversion, read his sermons from the pulpit,—as soon as he commenced out-door services, he was astonished to find his strength increase, his health improve, and he was able to address the vast audiences who came to hear him without any notes. These blessings he distinctly acknowledged as having been the special gift of God, and consequently the assurance of His favour on the choice he had made. He lived in the spirit of prayer and faith; held some services daily, sometimes thrice in the day; and for some years he was surpassed by

no man since the apostolic times in the variety and extent of his labours, and in his power and efficiency as a Christian preacher. The people everywhere fell under the power of the Word like grass under the scythe of the mower.

In August, 1739, John and Charles Wesley met in Bristol; the latter was left in charge of the small society there for some time, and then commenced a career of usefulness in that city which was continued for more than thirty years, until Mr. Wesley retired from Bristol with his family, in 1771, and took up his residence in London. Early in 1739, Charles Wesley published his first Hymn-book, although his brother John took all the risk of the printing and selling; but they sold so freely that three editions were issued in that year. In 1740, another book of hymns was published, and one additional, at least, each year till 1750. He wrote, and his brother published about sixty books and tracts of hymns from 1739 to the year 1785, when the last was issued. A list of all these publications is printed at page 412 of "Memorials of the Wesley Family," and in the "Methodist Hymn-book, Illustrated with History, Biography, &c," 1883. If Charles Wesley had done no other good during his long life of fourscore years, the hymns which he wrote are a permanent legacy to the Church of Christ which Christians will enjoy to the end of time.

He began to itinerate soon after his conversion, and in his journeys on horseback he visited and preached in nearly every part of England, and in many parts of Ireland and Wales. In 1742 he was at Oxford, and was appointed to preach before the University, at St. Mary's: that was the last time either he or his brother was permitted to preach there. John was in London with a few pious friends, praying earnestly for Charles at the time he was preaching at Oxford. The sermon was from "Awake thou that sleepest, &c." Eph. v. 14, it was immediately printed, and at least twenty-eight editions were issued in the author's lifetime.

For more than ten years after his conversion, Charles Wesley had no home but such as he found day by day in the various places he visited. In the summer of 1744 he was in Cornwall, a county which had been notorious for wickedness. The results of the labours of the Methodists amongst the Cornish people had so far changed their habits, that there was not a felon in their prisons at the spring assizes in 1744.

As an example of the simplicity and plain speech used even in the pulpit in those days, Charles Wesley records having preached in the church of his friend Mr. Bennett, in Cornwall. Speaking against the drunken revels of many, one in the congregation contradicted and blasphemed. The preacher asked, "Who is he who pleads for the devil?" The man boldly stood forward and said, "I am he." The extremes of wickedness to which sin leads its votaries were soon made so manifest, that the withering exposure of the preacher drove this champion of sin out of the church. Mr. Wesley then warned the people, amongst whom were three clergymen, against "harmless diversions," declaring that by them he had been kept dead to God and asleep in the arms of Satan for eighteen years. Mr. Moreton cried out, "And I for twenty-five!" "And I for thirty-five!" responded Mr. Thompson. "And I for above seventy!" added Mr. Bennett. Thus was the truth confirmed quite spontaneously by four clergymen present, who were more anxious to arrest attention than to preserve decorum.

Assisting his brother to examine the Bristol Society in July, 1745, Marmaduke Gwynne, Esq., a wealthy gentleman of Garth, in Wales, was present, desiring to know something of the work of God by their labours amongst the people. Pleased with what he saw and heard, he invited the Wesleys to his mansion, where they were greeted by a large and highly-accomplished family. Nine sons and daughters, a resident chaplain, and twenty servants formed their household. Mrs. Gwynne inherited £30,000 in her own right. Having had many and strong prejudices removed from her mind by reading John Wesley's "Appeal to Men of Reason and Religion," issued in 1743, she was prepared to show marked kindness to both the brothers when introduced to the family.

Charles Wesley visited Garth several times during the three following years, and on each occasion he saw so much to admire and love in Miss Sarah Gwynne, a very handsome and accomplished lady, nineteen years younger than himself, that he ultimately consulted with his brother on the desirableness of marriage. They had more than ten years previously resolved that neither should marry without the consent of the other. In November, 1748, Charles Wesley obtained the

consent of John to change his condition in life. John had perceived the desire of his brother, and had thought of recommending to him three young ladies from whom to make a choice. One of them was Miss Sarah Gwynne, on whom Charles had already fixed his affections. Visiting Garth to solicit the young lady's hand, both the parents and the young lady gave their consent, the only condition being that Mr. Wesley should secure an income of £100 a-year before the marriage.

Having no preferment, and only a small income, serious difficulties came in the way of obtaining what was required. At length John Wesley agreed to allow his brother for his services the proposed sum annually out of the profits from the sale of their books, the joint property of both brothers. He afterwards signed a legal bond guaranteeing to his brother £100 a-year. The marriage took place as soon as these formalities were completed. John Wesley had a fear lest Mrs. Gwynne should require her son-in-law to give up his itinerant life. Finding that no restriction of that kind was intended, John and Charles Wesley met at Garth; and on Saturday, 8th April, 1749, John Wesley joined the hands of Sarah Gwynne, aged twenty-three, and Charles Wesley, aged forty-two, in the holy bonds of marriage, their hearts having been united long before. There was not a cloud to be seen on that day from morn till night. Charles Wesley rose at four in the morning, and, with his brother, his intended bride, and her sister Beck, they spent nearly four hours in prayer and singing hymns, some of which Charles Wesley had written for the occasion.

Resuming his travels within fourteen days, he exerted himself beyond his strength, and was overtaken by fever. On his recovery, he took his wife with him on his horse, she riding behind him, and she proved herself to be a help-meet indeed. In 1749, he published two volumes of Hymns by subscription, and he obtained 1145 subscribers for the work, at twelve shillings each; he did this to obtain the money to enable him to furnish the small cottage he took for his home, in Stoke's Croft, Bristol, in which city he resided over twenty years, and where several children were born, and several died and were interred in St. James's churchyard there. When his first child was born, Charles Wesley wrote the following:—

"LINES ON AN INFANT.

"The man that ushered thee to light, my child,
Saw thee in tears while all around thee smiled:
When summoned hence to thine eternal sleep,
Oh, mayst thou smile while all around thee weep."

It was not long before the prayer of the parent was answered, and the bereaved father consoled himself and his beloved partner with another stanza:—

"ON THE DEATH OF AN INFANT.

"Ere sin could blight or sorrow fade,
Death came with friendly care,
The opening bud to heaven conveyed,
And bade it blossom there."

That is the kind of resignation Christianity affords to bereaved parents.

Returning to London, Charles was preaching at the Foundry in the morning at five o'clock, on 8th March, 1750, when the shock of an earthquake occurred, more violent than that on 8th February. Just as the text was being repeated, the Foundry shook, the women and children cried aloud; and then the Spirit of God supplied the preacher with another text, and he cried out above the multitude: "Therefore will we not fear, though the earth be moved, and the hills be carried into the midst of the sea: for the Lord of Hosts is with us, the God of Jacob is our refuge." The faith and earnestness of the preacher comforted the people, and he spoke strong words which moved both their souls and bodies. Charles Wesley improved the occasion by writing and publishing, in two parts, "Hymns occasioned by the Earthquake, 8th March, 1750." They had a large sale, for all London was in commotion, and multitudes cried for mercy.

Whilst the earthquake was creating widespread alarm, Charles Wesley's sister, Mehetabel, was ill, and expecting every hour to be her last. Charles visited and prayed with her on 5th and 14th March. He called again on 21st March, but the call was a few minutes after her spirit was set at liberty. On the 26th he attended her body to its quiet grave, weeping with the bereaved family. Charles Wesley, during all the years his wife and family resided in Bristol, spent ten out of the twelve months of each year in London, preaching daily at one of the five chapels the Methodists then had in the metropolis,

and paying occasional visits to places a little beyond London. The last preaching tour Charles Wesley made in the provinces was during the summer of 1756, when he travelled and preached through Staffordshire, Yorkshire, and Lancashire; after that he confined his labours as a preacher between London and Bristol.

In December, 1757, his son Charles was born; two brothers and a sister born before him had died young, and the parents earnestly desired and prayed that Charles, named after his father, might be spared to them. Their prayer was answered; he outlived both his parents, and died in 1834, aged seventy-seven years. He became one of the most accomplished organists in England.

In February, 1766, a further source of joy was added to the domestic circle by the birth of another son, who was named Samuel. He was a prodigy of musical learning from infancy. At the age of six he wrote an oratorio; and at eight was taken in court apparel, provided by Lord Mornington, to play Handel's music before the King and Court. Lord Barrington published an account of the extraordinary genius in music of those two boys. Samuel became great as a composer and organist, and died in London in 1837, aged seventy-one years. Another son was born to them in 1768, but he died young. Charles having written to his brother concerning the new infant, John made the following remarkable reply: "It is highly probable that one of the three boys will stand before the Lord [as a preacher]. But, so far as I can learn, such a thing has scarce been these thousand years before, as a son, father, grandfather, *ætarus tritavus*, preaching the genuine Gospel in a line. You know Mr. John White, some time chairman of the Assembly of Divines, was our grandmother's father." Samuel Wesley, rector of Epworth, was ordained deacon, and began to preach in 1688; Charles Wesley, his son, began to preach before his father died, and he continued to preach till 1788, so that between father and son, the Gospel was continuously preached for one hundred years. There are very few such instances on record; but there were Wesleys preaching continuously from 1600, or thereabouts, till 1791, a period unbroken for over one hundred and ninety years. There are several Wesleys still who are preaching the genuine Gospel, both in the Church of England and in Methodism.

Finding so many difficulties arising from his having to spend the greater part of each year in London, whilst his family were in Bristol, in 1771, he not having money sufficient to pay for the removal of his family to London, a subscription was commenced to meet the expense, but without Charles Wesley's knowledge. A wealthy Methodist lady residing at Bath, the wife of Colonel Gumley, who was godmother to young Charles Wesley, hearing about Mr. Wesley's intended removal from Bristol, sent for him, and said to him in substance: she had a house in London which had thirty years' lease to run, it was furnished, with ample provisions in the cellars for her own family; she desired his acceptance of the lease, the furniture, and provisions, and gave him also money to pay his and his family's fare to the metropolis. Never during his lifetime did Charles Wesley explain to any one the reason why he, a poor Methodist preacher, should live in a large mansion, for such it was in those days, in the aristocratic part of London,—Great Chesterfield Street, Marylebone. There he settled, three miles from the Foundry where he preached, but he made the journey almost daily on a white palfrey; and there he died, and there his widow lived so long as the lease was unexpired. It was a noble, generous gift on the part of Mrs. Gumley; but she owed her conversion to the preaching of the Wesleys at the very commencement of Methodism in Bristol and Bath, and she made that as part of her acknowledgment of indebtedness to Methodism. But her bounty went further; and, amongst other things, she gave young Charles Wesley the first organ he had to play upon, which cost forty pounds.

From the time of his settlement in London, Charles Wesley devoted himself to the education of his three children, Charles, Sarah, and Samuel, each of whom early became accomplished classical scholars, being able to write and speak Greek and Latin at the age of eight. For his two sons he secured the training of the best organists in London; and one of them refused payment for his services, being content to hear his pupils play his own manuscript pieces, as they often brought out of them better musical effects than he, as the composer, supposed they contained.

Charles Wesley took a deep interest in any public movements connected with religion. Sometimes he was drawn out in prayer

with a fervour which seemed impossible to one so fragile in body, and on such occasions the divine presence was manifested with so much power that all his audience felt that God was there. Once, in the summer of 1772, when administering the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper at the Foundry, he was constrained to stop in the course of the service, and pray with great earnestness for the Rev. John Fletcher. The large audience in London was impressed and blessed under that prayer, and the influence of it reached to Madeley in Salop; for on asking Mr. Fletcher, in a letter, how he felt on the previous Sunday, Mr. Fletcher replied: "That he had been wondering how he had been inwardly loosed that day, and how prayer and praise came from a much greater depth in his heart than usual, and the blessing had remained with him ever since." It is manifest, therefore, that there is power in prayer, and sympathy at the throne of grace, when faith accompanies prayer, just as in so many of the reported miracles of Christ it was the faith of the suppliant that brought the blessing. In praying for Mr. Fletcher, Charles Wesley was himself blessed, and his congregation also. In the summer of 1776, Mr. Fletcher fell into a serious illness, which appeared to be a confirmed consumption. He came to London for careful nursing, and Charles Wesley, with great ardour and importunity, prayed for his recovery, and wrote a hymn, which was sung by the Societies at London and Bristol, entitled, "A Prayer for the Rev. Mr. John Fletcher, 30th June, 1776." Mr. Fletcher recovered, and resumed his ministry. Charles Wesley took a deep interest, also, in the case of the unfortunate Dr. Dodd, and he wrote and published "A Prayer for Dr. Dodd, under Condemnation"; he was executed for forgery in 1777.

What were known as the Gordon riots in London, in 1780, were to Charles Wesley a source of intense anxiety, and he wrote to his brother John in the country, telling him his fears that the rioters would pull down all the Protestant chapels they came near, and their new chapel in City Road amongst them. Mob law prevailed a long time; but the Methodists were earnest, constantly praying for divine protection, and the rioters did not disturb the City Road worshippers of God. When the danger was past, the event was commemorated by Charles Wesley in a tract of "Hymns written in the Time of the Tumult,

June, 1780," in which he prayed in verse for the King, his family, and even for the persecuted Roman Catholics.

Charles Wesley attended the Conference of 1780, held at Bristol, the last he was present at. He was unwell at the time, and afterwards became much worse, and a feeling of melancholy came over him, engendered by age and weakness. His sufferings were great, and the only food he could take was dry toast. He was then uncertain whether he should live or die; and writing to his son, Charles, he said, "My father I have heard say, God had shown him he should have all his nineteen children about him in heaven; I have the same blessed hope for my eight. His blessing be upon you all." He was then seventy-three years old.

A very touching, important, and interesting event took place at the residence of Mrs. Hannah More in 1786, when William Wilberforce, M.P., a young rising statesman, was introduced to Charles Wesley, then nearly fourscore years old. On entering the room, Mr. Wesley rose, met Mr. Wilberforce, and gave him his blessing. In recording the event, the young philanthropist said, "Such was the effect of his manner and appearance that it altogether overset me, and I burst into tears, unable to restrain myself." God was in that blessing, and the beneficial effects of it were seen after many days. Two years afterwards, Mr. Wesley died; and on learning how small an annuity Mrs. Wesley had to live upon, Mr. Wilberforce sent her £60, and continued to send her the same amount yearly for thirty years, till she died, 1822, aged ninety-six years.

Approaching the age of fourscore, Charles Wesley was deeply conscious of his being near the end of his pilgrimage, and within a short space of time, six or seven of his endeared personal friends were called away from earth. These solemn calls increased his earnestness in what service he was able to render. He usually preached at the City Road Chapel every Sunday morning and afternoon; at times the Word was enforced and applied with an energy and zeal which astonished his hearers. On one occasion his gown caught the hymn-book, and it fell on the head of Dr. Coke, who was seated in the desk below. Unconscious of the event, the zeal of the preacher abated not; and fearing a worse result, Dr. Coke stood and looked up, and soon afterwards the

Bible came down, and was caught without doing any harm; but Charles Wesley did not know what was done till he had finished his discourse. Having no actual disease, he continued to preach as long as any strength remained in him. There followed a state of prostration, which did not prevent him riding out daily for a short time. When this had to be given up, his brother John was in London; and he remonstrated: as he thought, by persevering in his out-door exercise, he might again rally. He enjoined on Dr. Whitehead to visit him, and enforce this exercise if possible. He paid the visit, and charged his guinea for it to the City Road Stewards. He repeated his visits afterwards from friendship, and described the condition of the patient as one of "unaffected humility, and holy resignation to the will of God. He had no transport of joy, but solid hope, unshaken confidence in Christ, and perfect peace." John Wesley took his farewell leave of his brother at the end of February, 1788. Within a week Charles was unable to write, and his daughter, Sarah, answered her Uncle John's letters, which were full of affectionate anxiety. Recovering a little strength, he wrote his last hymn, for the poetic fire was not extinguished, though burning very feebly; the hymn has four stanzas of six lines each, and on it is inscribed, "Written a little before his death." In it he prays for perfect holiness to change the human to divine, and commences the last verse thus:—

"O, that the joyful hour was come
Which calls Thy ready servant home."

The hour was near, and lingering on the borderland of heaven, extreme weakness came on, and he called for Mrs. Wesley, and asked her to write as he repeated the following lines:—

"In age and feebleness extreme,
Who shall a sinful worm redeem?
Jesus, my only hope Thou art,
Strength of my failing flesh and heart;
Oh, could I catch a smile from Thee,
And drop into eternity!"

Unconscious of pain, without any disease, he lingered on, passing out of the world in the same manner that he entered it. At his birth he showed no signs of consciousness for many days; at his dying he lay patient, passive, and prostrate, watched day and night, either by

his daughter, his wife, or Samuel Bradburn, till 29th March, 1788, when the weary wheels of life stood still; his spirit returned to God in so tranquil a manner, that they who sat by him did not know the moment when the spirit departed from him. He was aged eighty years and four months, and his body was interred in Marylebone Churchyard, only a short distance from his residence in Great Chesterfield Street, and in the parish in which he dwelt. A tomb was erected over his grave, which was so much decayed half-a-century afterwards, that the Wesleyan Book Committee replaced it by a marble tomb, surmounted by an obelisk. In the same grave are deposited the bodies of Mrs. Wesley, and their two sons, Charles and Samuel.

The following brief sketch of his character is extracted from the marble tablet to his memory in City Road Chapel :—

"As a preacher, he was eminent for ability, zeal, and usefulness, being learned without pride, and pious without ostentation; to the sincere diffident Christian, a son of consolation—to the vain boaster, the hypocrite, and the profane, a son of thunder. He was the first who received the name of Methodist; joined his brother as an itinerant preacher, endured hardships, persecution, and disgrace, contributing largely to the first formation of the Methodist Societies. As a Christian poet he stood unrivalled, and his hymns will convey instruction and consolation to the faithful in Christ Jesus as long as the English language is spoken. He was a firm believer of the doctrines of the Gospel, and a sincere friend of the Church of England."

A brass medal was distributed to the members of Society, to commemorate his death, on which was the Lord's Prayer on one side, and his name and date of death on the other. A good Methodist woman said, on leaving the Chapel at City Road, where his death was announced at the five o'clock morning service: "Who will poetry for us now?" But God has taken care of the poetry, just as he took care of his widow.

John Fletcher, of Madeley.

[*Born*, 1729 : *Entered the Ministry*, 1757 : *Died*, 1785.]

A BEAUTIFUL spirit escaped from earth, but little contaminated by sin, when that of the saintly Fletcher exchanged mortality for life, nearly a century since. Although a hundred years have passed since he was vicar of Madeley, yet to this day in that village, no name of man is spoken with more love and reverence than is that of John Fletcher, in whom humility, simplicity, piety, and purity were so happily blended with learning and good manners, that the reputation of the man has not only lived, but has diffused its genial influence over christendom.

His proper family name was Jean Guillaume de la Flechère, and he was descended from one of the most considerable families in Switzerland, a branch of the Earldom of Savoy. He was the youngest son of the family, born at the Chateau at Nyon, 12th September, 1729. "The house where I was born," wrote Mr. Fletcher, "had withstood the storms of centuries, and has one of the finest prospects in the world; we have a shady wood near the lake, where I can ride in the cool all day, and enjoy the singing of a multitude of birds." Of his early life but little is recorded. He early discovered great quickness of apprehension and vivacity of character, blended with a deep sense of the majesty of God. One day he offended his father, when quite a child, and ran away from him to avoid correction; but whilst concealed

in the garden, the conviction of his error brought him to his father; and he remembered the feeling of remorse long afterwards. On another occasion he, when only seven years old, quarrelled with one of his brothers, for which he was reproved by a female servant, whose words brought him to his knees before God; he confessed his fault, and had peace of mind for his reward. His mother he dearly loved, but one day he offended her undesignedly, and she punished him for his forwardness; with a look of affection he meekly replied, "When I am smitten on the one cheek, and especially by a hand I love so well, I am taught to turn the other also." Immediately, indignation was changed for admiration; the mother, after that speech, loved her boy more than ever.

He studied with his two brothers at the celebrated College at Geneva, and soon distinguished himself above nearly all his competitors, carrying off the most valuable prizes. By his diligence and application he acquired that classical taste which gave both dignity and refinement to his simple manners in after life. He had many escapes from premature death before he was fourteen; he thought nothing of swimming five or six miles in any water, no matter how deep or rough. He also practised fencing with swords, and on one occasion he was much wounded by his brother's sword. Having completed his college course, he returned home; studied German, Hebrew, and the higher mathematics, with the view of entering the ministry of the Church, but on considering the high Calvinism of the Geneva articles, his mind revolted from subscribing them, and he yielded to the wish of his friends, who then advised him to enter the army. He now began to study gymnastics and fortifications, and went to Lisbon with a captain's commission in the Portuguese service. He was ordered to be in readiness to sail to Brazil for active service; but a servant overturned a kettle of boiling water over his leg, and he was confined to bed in consequence, when the vessel sailed for Brazil, and thus was he again delivered from certain death, for the ship and all her crew were lost. His military ardour was not checked; he returned home, then hastened to Flanders, where his uncle, who was a colonel in the Dutch service, procured him a commission. His uncle died shortly after; peace was proclaimed, and he gave up going into the army.

His next thought was to visit England, to learn our language and literature. On his arrival, unable to speak English, he entrusted all his money, £90, to a Jew who spoke French, to whom he made his wants known. That Jew was honest, and after changing his money for English, brought it all back to him. Mr. Burchell, of South Mimms, Hertfordshire, was his tutor, and under him he studied for eighteen months, and made remarkable progress. He next engaged himself as a teacher of French to the family of Mr. Hill, M.P. for Shrewsbury, who resided at Tern Hall. The slender state of his finances induced him to remain in that situation some time. Under the roof of that mansion, his mind was awakened to a sense of his lost condition as a sinner. In his youth he had gained a prize at the Geneva College for the best essay on Christian Godliness, but he found out that he was really ignorant of what godliness was. He had a remarkable and startling dream, in which he was a witness of the end of the world, of the last judgment, and of the terrible doom of those who had not Jesus for their Saviour. He was a rigid formalist in religion, regularly attended public worship, made long prayers in his chamber; but his hope of salvation was in his prayers, and a certain habit he had of saying, "Lord, I am a great sinner; pardon me for the sake of Jesus Christ;" but his heart was untouched, the carnal nature was unregenerated. One Sunday he was copying some music in his room, when the man-servant, a godly man, entered, and seeing how he was occupied, told him that was the Lord's day, and should be sanctified in a very different manner. His mind was impressed by the observations made; he had made a new discovery, and feeling his own deficiency, began to make serious inquiries of Christian friends.

When Mr. Hill went up to London to attend the Parliament, in January, 1755, he took his family with him, and Mr. Fletcher also; while they stopped at St. Albans, he walked out into the town, and did not return till they were set out for London, A horse being left for him, he rode after, and overtook them in the evening. Mr. Hill asked him why he stayed behind? He replied, "As I was walking, I met with a poor old woman, who talked so sweetly of Jesus Christ, that I knew not how the time passed away." "I shall wonder," said Mrs. Hill, "if

our tutor does not turn Methodist, by-and-by." "Methodist, madam; pray what is that?" inquired Fletcher. She replied, "Why, the Methodists are a people that do nothing but pray; they are praying all day and all night." "Are they?" said he; "then by the help of God I will find them out if they be above ground." He did find them out not long after, and was admitted into the Society. From that time, whenever he was in town, he met in the class led by Mr. Edwards, and found the exercise so profitable to his soul, that he lost no opportunity of meeting. He enjoyed the privilege of the class meeting, and continued a member of Society during his life. One of his Society tickets, dated twenty years after the events just named, is now in the possession of the writer of these lines, and is proof of his continued membership. On Sunday, 19th January, 1755, he heard a sermon on the words, "Being justified by faith, we have peace with God, through our Lord Jesus Christ." His heart was still hard, but that sermon brought fresh light and deeper convictions; he began to read the experience of the Lord's people, prayed much, read his Bible more, and soon afterwards several passages of Scripture were in succession brought before him; he took God at His word, trusted, believed, and then was filled with joy. He then asked God for perseverance and grace to serve Him till death, and how fully and faithfully he did that service is well known to the Church and the world.

In 1756, Mr. Fletcher's father died, and he had the satisfaction of learning that in his illness he had repentance unto life, and died in full assurance of faith. His mind now was seriously turned towards the ministry. His patron, Mr. Hill, had procured him preferment in the Church, if he would take orders. On 24th November, 1756, Fletcher wrote a long letter to John Wesley, asking his advice in the matter. The result was, he offered himself a candidate for holy orders, and was ordained deacon by the Bishop of Hereford, on 6th March, 1757, and priest, on Sunday, 13th March, by the Bishop of Bangor, at the Chapel Royal, St. James's, London. Under that date, John Wesley made this record in his Journal: "13th March,—Finding myself weak at Snowsfields, I prayed that God would send me help at the chapel, and I had it. As soon as I had done preaching, Mr. Fletcher came, who had just been ordained priest, and hastened to the chapel on purpose to assist

me at the administration of the Lord's Supper, as he supposed me to be alone." So the earnest Fletcher began his ministerial work in the Methodist chapel.

For three years Mr. Fletcher was constantly preaching in London and in the country. In London he had free access to Mr. Wesley's pulpits, but he also preached in French to meetings of his countrymen, his English pronunciation being then so Frenchified, as to make it difficult for English hearers to understand him at times; but this he was able to correct by continued exercise. In June, 1757, he preached his first sermon in the country, at Atcham, near Shrewsbury, on "The Friendship of the World is Enmity against God;" it was a bold sermon he preached, and the prevailing wickedness was unsparingly exposed. He preached also at the church at Wroxeter, and the Abbey Church, and St. Alkmunds, Shrewsbury. His services were gratuitous, as he remained in Mr. Hill's family as tutor. In 1760, the sons were sent to the University, and his patron desired to provide suitably for the young clergyman. One day, in that year, Mr. Hill informed him that the living of Dunham, Cheshire, was at his disposal, and he offered it to Mr. Fletcher, saying, "The parish is small, the duty light, the income (£400 per annum) was good, and it is situated in a fine healthy sporting country." After thanking Mr. Hill for his kindness, Mr. Fletcher added, "Alas! sir, Dunham will not suit me; there is too much money, and too little labour." Mr. Hill replied, "Few clergymen make such objections; it is a pity to decline such a living, as I do not know that I can find you another; what shall we do? Would you like Madeley?" "That, sir, would be the very place for me," was the reply. Then added the patron, "My object, Mr. Fletcher, is to make you comfortable in your own way. If you prefer Madeley, I shall have no difficulty in persuading Chambers, the present vicar, to exchange it for Dunham, which is worth more than twice as much." Such was the way in which divine Providence opened the way for Mr. Fletcher to enter on that grand sphere of usefulness which he pursued for twenty-five years with such untiring energy, and such blessed results.

The closest friendship subsisted between Mr. Wesley and Mr. Fletcher, and they were together on every possible occasion. They travelled together, preached for each other; Fletcher's presence in the Methodist

Conference was hailed almost like that of an angel from heaven; his influence there was very great, and of his preaching and general character Mr. Wesley thus wrote:—

"Instead of being confined to a country village, Mr. Fletcher ought to have shone in every corner of our land. He was full as much called to sound an alarm through all the nation as Mr. Whitefield; nay, abundantly more so, seeing he was much better qualified for that important work. He had a more striking person, a more winning address, a richer flow of fancy, a stronger understanding, a far greater treasure of learning,—both in languages, philosophy, philology, and divinity,—and, above all, a more deep and constant communion with the Father, and with His Son Jesus Christ. For holy tempers and holiness of conversation one equal to Mr. Fletcher I have not known; no, not in a life of fourscore years."

Similar testimony was borne subsequently, both by the pulpit and the press, in almost countless instances.

In 1766, Mr. Fletcher preached a powerful sermon, in which he exposed the true character of popery so convincingly, that he arrested the purpose of a Romish priest to establish a church of that persuasion at Madeley. In 1770, he paid a visit to his native land, and to some Huguenots in whom he was much interested. He was accompanied on his journey by a wealthy and pious Methodist merchant of Bristol, Mr. Ireland, a beloved friend of the Wesleys. His account of that journey, which included a visit to Naples, Pompeii, Herculaneum, and Rome, is one of very deep interest, and exhibits his careful observation, and his deep concern for the ignorance and impiety which met his eyes and ears everywhere.

In 1771, Mr. Fletcher was appointed by Lady Huntingdon, the principal of her College at Trevecca, with Joseph Benson as head-master; but, on learning that both of them preached Arminian doctrines, they were summarily dismissed. In a letter of Mr. Fletcher's to Mr. Benson, dated 24th August, 1771, the original of which is in the possession of the writer, Mr. Fletcher asks, "What are our dear lady's jealousies come to? Ah, poor College, they are without a master, but not without a mistress!" That was part of the outcome of the important controversy which occupied the Methodist Conference in 1770 and 1771; and to answer the controverted doctrines, Mr. Fletcher wrote and published that most elaborate work, "Checks to Antinomianism," a work which has been kept in print and in

constant circulation for more than a hundred years. The natural disposition of Mr. Fletcher was averse from polemical divinity, but a deep sense of the doctrinal evil then so prevalent induced him, with much reluctance, to engage in the painful task. During the whole time he was writing those checks, his mind was kept in a state of calm and humble dependence upon God. As the result of that publication, Pelagianism was eradicated from the Church of England, and Antinomianism received an effectual check.

In 1773, John Wesley wrote a most important letter to Mr. Fletcher in which he designed, in case Mr. Fletcher survived him, that he should succeed him in the management of the Methodist Societies. Mr. Fletcher predeceased Mr. Wesley by six years, and he himself wrote and published the first "Life" of Mr. Fletcher, a volume of 227 pages. In the same year, 1773, Mr. Fletcher wrote to the Rev. Charles Wesley a letter, in which he made this confession: "Old age comes faster upon me than upon you; I am already so greyheaded that I wrote to my brother to know if I am not fifty-six instead of forty-six; and yet, praised be God, my strength is preserved far better than I could expect." It should be recorded, that there was the deepest and strongest friendship between Mr. Fletcher and Charles Wesley, which is indicated by the frequent letters they exchanged, and the brotherly confidence expressed in them.

In 1776, Mr. Fletcher, being advised to travel for change of air, in pursuit of health, he paid a visit to the Rev. John Berridge, vicar of Everton. He had visited him about twenty years previously, and the meeting was remarkable. Nor was it less so on this occasion; for although Mr. Berridge had tried to answer Mr. Fletcher's "Checks," and had opposed his views as strongly as language would permit, when the Everton vicar saw Mr. Fletcher enter his room, he ran up to him, embracing him in his arms, and with looks of delight and tears of affection, exclaimed, "My dear brother, how could we write against each other?" The two ministers prayed together before the whole household, and such a time of the manifest presence of God was seldom before known. The two men again met in London, at the house of Charles Greenwood, Stoke Newington, with the same marks of strong affection. At that time, 1777, Mr. Fletcher made the acquaintance of

Mr. William Perronet, towards whom his heart's affection was drawn, and he continued his loving attentions to him to the time of his early and premature death. In December of that year, Mr. Fletcher again visited his native land with Mr. Ireland, seeking rest and health, and yet he was constantly working for the Master. Nor did he forget his parishioners at Madeley during his enforced rest, but kept up his teachings by long and valuable letters. His stay was protracted in Switzerland, but he was preaching as often as opportunity offered. He remained chiefly with his sister, whose long and dangerous illness prolonged his visit. One of the years he spent there was memorable for the deaths of three notable men,—Voltaire, Rousseau, and Baron Haller; he made characteristic remarks on the life and manner of dying of each of them. Baron Haller was a philosopher, politician, and poet, skilful in botany, anatomy, and physic, and of his death he remarks: "Smatterers in philosophy are often impious, true philosophers are always religious; Haller's conversation was pious and edifying." He returned to England in March, 1781. In passing through Paris with Mr. Ireland, he attended on a sick person, and would have brought on him the censure of the Romish Church, had not Mr. Ireland, who was mistaken for him by the police, suffered them to remain in their error till Mr. Fletcher had escaped from the city, and was too far on his journey to be overtaken. They afterwards joined each other, and arrived in England in April, after an absence of three years and four months.

No man's life was more marked with evidences of the direction of divine Providence than was that of Mr. Fletcher. Many instances are on record of divine interposition on his behalf, in every period of his life from infancy to his last days. It was especially marked in the matter of his marriage. During his stay in Switzerland, his friends had strongly urged him to marry, but he asked himself, what he could do with a Swiss wife at Madeley. His mind being directed to the subject, he had not much difficulty in making his choice, although he was personally acquainted with several godly ladies, and corresponded with them, any one of whom would have been to him a helpmeet. His thoughts centred themselves in one whom he had first met in 1756, and of whose godly life and earnest work for the Master he had

been a noteworthy observer for a quarter of a-century. This was Miss Mary Bosanquet, the daughter of a wealthy man, lord of the manor of Leytonstone, in Essex, whom Mr. Fletcher had first met and conversed with soon after his conversion, when she was a girl of only seventeen. As soon as his choice was made, he wrote an offer of marriage to Miss Bosanquet, which she received on 8th June, 1781; they two had long admired each other, but Fletcher regarded the fortune of the young lady as a barrier to their marriage, and she had for years been too much occupied by her philanthropic schemes to think of marriage. She consulted with Mr. Wesley, so also did Mr. Fletcher, after which Mr. Fletcher visited Miss Bosanquet at her home in Yorkshire, Cross Hall. Both were well connected in their family relationships, but the lady did not then know that her lover belonged to one of the noble families of Sardinia; nor was she aware till after their marriage that he carried with him, but never used, a seal on which was the family arms. Consent to marry having been obtained, Mr. Fletcher exchanged pulpits with the Rev. John Crosse of Bradford, Yorkshire, and he preached in Methodist chapels also. They were married by licence in Batley Church, on 12th November, 1781, and were respectively of the ages of fifty-two and forty-two, Mrs. Fletcher having been born the same month and day as her husband, only ten years later. The account of their wedding-day is a most interesting and original record, written by Mrs. Crosby, who was one of the twenty persons present. Two days afterwards, John Wesley, in a letter to Mr. Fletcher, began thus: "There is not a person to whom I would have had Miss Bosanquet joined besides you: but this union is of God."

From the time that he settled at Madeley with Mrs. Fletcher, he had no return of his consumptive disorder; on the contrary, by the blessing of God on her peculiar care and tenderness, not only his health was confirmed, but his strength restored as in the days of his youth; and he took care to employ all his time and strength in doing all the good he could to the poor people around him. There were eight public-houses in his parish; these he visited on Sunday between the hours of service, in company with his church-warden, and speaking kind and encouraging words to those he met there; some of them were

reclaimed from the paths of sin, and in every house he bore a faithful testimony against sin.

For many years he was deeply concerned at the ignorance of the children in his parish; he at length succeeded in establishing a day-school, and not only provided an adequate teacher, but superintended it himself. The question of Sunday schools was talked about in 1781 and 1782, and seeing that great advantage would be likely to arise from having one in his parish, he drew up proposals and circulated them, and the result was he soon gathered three hundred children, and arranged for their being taught in six separate places in Madeley, Madeley Wood, and at Coalbrookdale. These schools he took every opportunity of visiting himself, instructing the children up to the Thursday before his last illness. As the children were utterly ignorant, and employed all the week at some kind of work, he arranged that they should be taught reading, writing, and the principles of religion. The boys and girls were in separate buildings, so there were two rooms required at each of the places named. They were supported by subscription; three or four inspectors were appointed to visit the schools, and registers were kept for the names and attendance of both teachers and scholars. It was not long before a general reformation took place in the parish, and many that had been notorious for all manner of wickedness, old and young, learned to worship God in spirit and in truth. Very remarkable instances are on record of the vilest and worst of men being rescued and saved. The laying of the foundation stone of the Madeley Sunday School was the last public work on which Mr. Fletcher was engaged. He also made provision for preaching services being held at Madeley Wood. Some of his parishioners had to travel some miles to attend the Sunday services at his church. If these did not bring their own provisions, he always welcomed them to food in the vicarage, and he scarcely seemed ever to enjoy his meals unless he knew that some sick or indigent neighbour should partake also. With all his generosity, he was ever careful to live within his income. To effect this, it was his custom to pay for everything when it was purchased, thereby keeping his mind unencumbered, and free from perplexing cares. His property, his time, his all, he considered as consecrated to God and to the service of his flock.

In 1783, he and Mrs. Fletcher were earnestly entreated to visit the family of the Rev. E. Smyth, of Dublin; but not having the means of meeting such an expense, the money came from an unexpected source, and the journey was made. He preached at various places on his way, and during his stay in Dublin, in the latter place, both in French and English. His exhortations were attended with a remarkable blessing, numbers of careless persons being awakened and brought to Christ. Some Irish people attended at the French Church, who knew nothing of the language in which he preached, and on being asked why they were there, they answered, "We want to *look at him*, for heaven seemed to beam from his countenance." When about to leave Dublin, a purse of money was presented to him to pay his expenses; but he declined to receive it, saying they were all paid; he took the purse, then, understanding that their fund for the poor was run out, he returned it, and desired that all the money might be distributed amongst their own poor. But he thanked them as much for the gift as if he had retained it. and he esteemed it a privilege thus to be of service to the poor.

When unable through feebleness of body to do much work, he consoled himself by writing these observations:—

"I keep in my sentry-box till Providence remove me; my situation is quite suited to my little strength. I do as much or as little as I please, according to my weakness; and I have an advantage which I can have nowhere else in such a degree; my field of action is just at my door, so that if I happen to overdo myself I have but to step from my pulpit to my bed, and from my bed to the grave. If I had a body full of vigour, and a purse full of money, I should like well enough to travel about as Mr. Wesley does; but as Providence does not call me to it, I readily submit."

In the meantime, nothing seemed to him either hard or wearisome if it tended to the good of his people. He was blessed in himself, and an eminent blessing to all around him. "As he approached the end of life, the graces he had kept in exercise so long became more illustrious and powerful; his faith more assured; his hope more lively; his charity more abundant; his humility more profound; his resignation more complete." He was distinguished more than ever by meekness of wisdom, purity of conversation, lowliness of mind, and devotion to duty.

Never did husband and wife live and work together in more perfect love and harmony than did John and Mary Fletcher. They were both eminent as saints, and as workers together with God for the extension of His Kingdom. When it became evident to Mrs. Fletcher that the work of her husband was nearly done on earth, he said, in reply to her remarks on the subject, "Well, my love, let us think only of a holy life: as for the manner of our death, let us leave all to Him, who will do all things well." On 4th August, 1785, Mr. Fletcher was engaged in visiting sick persons from three in the afternoon till nine at night, and reaching home he said he had taken cold; next day he was unwell, and on the 6th he had fever. Sunday was the 7th, and although intensely feeble he could not be persuaded from preaching. He assured his wife that God would strengthen him to go through the duty. He had not proceeded far in the service when his countenance changed, and faintness came on; the windows being opened, he revived somewhat, and went through the service. Mercy was the subject of his discourse, and during its delivery he seemed to be raised above all the fears and feelings of humanity. His appearance and manner gave an irresistible influence to his words, for his hearers saw plainly the hand of death was upon him. Having finished the sermon, he walked to the Communion-table, where the same affecting scene was renewed with increased solemnity. Tears and sighs were blended whilst the people beheld their pastor offering up the last languid remains of a life he had lavishly spent in their service. In going through the Sacramental service he was frequently exhausted, but the spiritual vigour triumphed over the bodily weakness. The service lasted till two o'clock—he had struggled on for four hours; and when the benediction was pronounced, he was supported from the altar to his chamber, where he lay some time in a swoon. From that chamber he never walked again into the world.

The dying of John Fletcher was in accordance with his previous living. Mrs. Fletcher records that he manifested peculiar pleasure in repeating the lines—

> "While Jesus' blood through earth and skies
> Mercy, free, boundless mercy, cries."

And he would frequently add—"Yes, boundless—boundless—boundless."

"Mercy's full power I soon shall prove,
Loved with an everlasting love."

The solicitude he felt during his illness of only eight days led him to cry out, "Oh, my poor; what will become of my poor?" While his pious and endeared wife often knelt by his bedside, with their hands clasped, he strove to comfort her by expressions of tenderness and love. On one occasion he uttered the prayer—"Head of the Church, be Head of my wife." At times he was so overwhelmed with the presence and power of God, that he had to offer the prayer, "Lord, stay Thy hand, or the vessel will break." Roused, as it were with the shouts of angels, and kindled into rapture with visions of glory, he sang hymns of holy triumph as he had strength; he spoke as one whose lips had been touched with heavenly fire, and when unable to speak, his countenance beamed with the light which was shining on his mind and heart. His last day on earth was Sunday. How the people prayed for the pastor they so much loved, how much they did not know before! After the evening service the poor, who had so often fed at his table, lingered about the house, longing once more to look on his beaming face. Their desire was gratified; his chamber-door was set wide open, and one by one they passed, and looked with longing, loving eyes; he sat upright in bed, directly opposite the door, his countenance unaltered. How soon all was over! a few hours after he breathed his last, so peacefully that they knew not the exact instant of his departure. Thus died John Fletcher, vicar of Madeley for twenty-five years, on Sunday, 14th August, 1785, aged nearly fifty-six years. He was interred in the churchyard, in a plain oak coffin with a steel plate, without a pall, pall-bearers, scarf, or hat-band; but two thousand of his parishioners attended his funeral, with such signs of unaffected sorrow as mortals seldom look upon. In person he was tall, strongly built, and well proportioned, his face interesting and noble; his countenance indicated the extraordinary grace and elevation of his character. John Wesley, Joseph Benson, Robert Cox, and Luke Tyerman have each written and published Lives of him, and although

he has been a century in heaven, his name and memory are still precious amongst men. His widow survived him thirty years, and died 9th December, 1815, aged seventy-six years. Her Life was written in two volumes by Henry Moore.

On a marble mural tablet within the communion rails of City Road Chapel, London, is the following inscription :—

Sacred to the Memory of
THE REV. JOHN WILLIAM DE LA FLECHERE,
Vicar of Madeley, in Shropshire ;
Born at Nyon, in Switzerland, the XII. of September, A.D. MDCCXXIX., Died the XIV. of August, MDCCLXXXV.
A man eminent for Genius, Eloquence, and Theological Learning ;
Still more distinguished for sanctity of Manners, and the virtues of primitive Christianity.
Adorned with "whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely,"
And bringing forth "the Fruits of the SPIRIT," in singular richness and maturity,
The measure of every other grace in him was exceeded by his deep and unaffected humility.
Of enlarged views as to the merit of the Atonement,
And of those gracious rights with which it invests all who believe,
He had "boldness to enter into the Holiest by the blood of JESUS."
And in reverent and transporting contemplations,—the habit of his devout and hallowed spirit,—
There dwelt as beneath the wings of the Cherubim,
Beholding "the glory of GOD, in the face of JESUS CHRIST," and was "changed into the same image ;"
Teaching by his own attainments, more than even by his writings, the fulness of the evangelical promises,
And with what intimacy of communion man may walk with GOD.

He was the friend and coadjutor of the Rev. JOHN WESLEY,
Whose apostolic views of the Doctrines of General Redemption, Justification by Faith,
And Christian Perfection, he successfully defended ;
Leaving to future ages an able exposition of "the truth which is according to godliness,"
And erecting an impregnable rampart against Pharisaic and Antinomian Error,
In a series of works, distinguished by the beauty of their style, by force of argument,
And by a gentle and catholic spirit ; affording an edifying example of "speaking the truth in love,"
In a long and ardent controversy.

For twenty-five years the parish of Madeley was the scene of his unexampled pastoral labours ;
And he was there interred, amidst the tears and lamentations of Thousands,
The testimony of their hearts to his exalted piety, and to his unwearied exertions for their salvation :
But his memory triumphed over death ;
And his saintly example exerts increasing influence in the Churches of CHRIST,
Through the study of his writings, and the publication of his biography.

In token of their veneration for his Character,
And in gratitude for the services rendered by him to the cause of Truth,
This Monument was erected by the Trustees of this Chapel, A.D. MDCCCXXII.

Thomas Coke, D.C.L., Bishop.

[*Born*, 1747 : *Entered the Ministry*, 1776 : *Died*, 1814.]

THAT which the Duke of Wellington was in the Peninsular wars,—what Lord Nelson was in the navy,—what St. Paul was amongst the apostles,—such was Thomas Coke amongst his brethren, the early Methodist preachers. He went through Ireland, Scotland, the West Indies, and America, as a flaming seraph, proclaiming the Gospel of Christ, and seeking to arouse multitudes to join in the work. How many dead souls were quickened to life by his earnest zeal and loving appeals, and how many thousands have been brought to know Christ by the agencies he called forth, eternity only can tell.

His father was a surgeon, the chief magistrate at Brecon,—Bartholomew Coke, a man of considerable property and influence. Thomas, his only child, was born at Brecon, 9th September, 1747 ; received a good preliminary education, after which he was sent to Jesus College, Oxford, in 1764, as a gentleman commoner. Having been brought up religiously, his mind was greatly disturbed by the licentious manners, and all kinds of wickedness he saw daily amongst the young collegians ; for infidelity was rife, and scepticism prevalent—so much so, that no long time was required to lead young Coke into the current of opinion. He lost his seriousness, became indifferent to religion, began to doubt divine truth, then became an unbeliever, an

infidel. His mother's religious teachings were stifled, not extinguished, and when he had time for meditation, he soon found himself on dangerous ground, and began seriously to examine the basis of his new opinions. Dr. Sherlock's "Discourses" then came in his way, and after carefully studying them, he resolved to change his course of action, and with some hesitation left his sceptical companions. Enduring their taunts and ridicule, he grew stronger in his convictions of the truth; but, although he decided for Christ and His religion, it was only in theory that he became a Christian. When he had completed his studies at the University, he took the degree of Doctor of Civil Law, and left Oxford, in June, 1775, having been ordained for the ministry.

The position occupied by his father offered many facilities, as he thought, for preferment in the Church; and, indeed, he had such fair promises, that one of his patrons gave him hopes of a prebendal stall at Worcester Cathedral; but no steps being taken in that direction by any one, he began to think of a curacy, as he longed for employment. His religious views were limited to merely abstract truths,—of experimental religion he then had no knowledge. To purchase a living was urged upon his attention; he had the means, but he had scruples on that point he could not overcome. Waiting in vain on promises unfulfilled, he heard of a vacant curacy at South Petherton, Somerset, a village of some two thousand inhabitants; this he promptly secured, and it afforded him an ample sphere for the exercise of his zeal, his talents, and his earnest desire to be useful. He began his ministry by selecting subjects for his sermons out of the vital truths of the Gospel; these he delivered with a degree of animation to which the people had not been accustomed, and he soon attracted large congregations. Having secured public attention, and fearing his own abilities might not fully sustain the interest awakened, he began to preach the sermons of distinguished men; but he was not an indifferent student, and was often engaged till midnight in the work he had undertaken. His mind became seriously impressed with the desire to know more of God, and to realise the new birth for himself, that he might the more faithfully preach it to the people who flocked to the church in such numbers, that he proposed the addition of a gallery.

This being refused by the churchwardens, who had not much sympathy with the growing excitement, Dr. Coke employed tradesmen, and built a gallery at his own private expense. This unexampled display of liberality awakened suspicions in the minds of the farmers and villagers that their minister must have some connection with the Methodists.

At that juncture Dr. Coke unexpectedly met with the Rev. Thomas Maxfield, Mr. Wesley's first lay-preacher, who had since received Episcopal ordination, and staying near South Petherton, heard the Doctor preach; they became friends, and his extended Christian experience as a preacher for more than thirty-six years was of much service to the young curate. Their first interview related to the question of conversion; to promote that object the Doctor read "Alleine's Alarm to the Unconverted." That work produced a revolution in his heart. Amongst the friends of the Doctor at that time was the Rev. Mr. Brown, rector of Portishead, and vicar of Kingston, near Taunton. That gentleman lent him Mr. Fletcher's "Appeal," and his "Checks to Antinomianism," which were read with great care, and studied. Speaking of those two books afterwards, he said: "They were the blessed means of bringing me among that despised people called Methodists, with whom, God being my helper, I am determined to live and die." At that time he carefully considered the creed of Calvin, and promised his congregation a sermon on the subject; he began to preach from the words, "Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons." He had not proceeded far in his discourse when his mind became confused; he could not recollect the passages on which he was to rely to prove the doctrines, and, overwhelmed with confusion, he had to stop in the midst of the sermon and dismiss the congregation. He soon after gained more light; and seeing how many of the poor in the parish did not come to church, he began to hold week-night services in their cottages. One evening, walking into the country to preach, he was most earnest in prayer, as he walked the lonely road, that the blessing of pardon might be realised by him; but it came not as he hoped it would. Arrived at the village, he began to preach, and was unfolding the greatness of redeeming love, when it pleased God to speak peace to his troubled spirit, and to fill his heart with joy, which he experienced but could not tell. He was

transported with joy on his return home, and in the first sermon he preached afterwards in the church, he told the people that he had experienced the blessing of pardon, and with increased fervour began to press his hearers to seek the same blessing.

Having entered on this new experience, he felt more confidence in God, and resolved to try to do without notes. His mental crutches being thrown aside, his first extempore sermon was attended with unusual unction, and under it three souls were awakened. These changes aroused a feeling of enmity against the minister,—his preaching without notes, the earnestness of his exhortations, his plainness of speech, and his week-evening lectures in the villages, all tended to create a ferment in the parish; and a charge was made against him to the bishop. In reply, the bishop said, to suspend him for three months would increase the ferment, and perhaps drive him to the Methodists, so he was let alone with simply an admonition. Disappointed at their failure, his opponents applied to the rector, who, to keep them in favour, peremptorily dismissed the curate, without any notice or farewell sermon in the church. The Doctor resolved to set himself right with the majority; so, on the Sunday after service, he gathered the congregation near the church, and preached to them in the open air, and promised a second service on the Sunday following. The rage of his enemies knew no bounds; but, conscious of his being in the right, he stood up between two children of a gentleman in the locality, at whose house the Doctor was staying, and the cowards gave him no molestation. That was the end of his three years' curacy in the Church of England, his first and last preferment there. He now waited the opening of Providence, but had not to wait long.

Hearing that Mr. Wesley was to preach at Taunton, he resolved to hear him, and, if possible, converse with him afterwards, as he was to be lodged at night with his friend, Mr. Brown, the rector of Kingston. The friends had their meeting, as we learn by the following entry in Mr. Wesley's Journal: "18th August, 1776,—I preached at Taunton, and afterwards went with Mr. Brown to Kingston. There I found a clergyman, Dr. Coke, of Jesus College, Oxford, who came twenty miles on purpose to meet me. I had much conversation with him, and a union then began which I trust shall never end." There is no record

how the next twelve months were spent, but on 19th August, 1777, Mr. Wesley wrote in his Journal: "I went forward to Taunton with Dr. Coke, who, being dismissed from his curacy, has bidden adieu to his honourable name, and is determined to cast in his lot with us." He did so, and attended the Conference that year, but had no location; he was probably engaged to visit the societies. At the Conference of 1779, he was appointed to labour in London, and great crowds gathered to hear him. He diligently studied the doctrines, discipline, and rules of Methodism, and became so useful and so popular, that, in 1780, he was made the superintendent of the London circuit. He was an invaluable acquisition to Methodism, and Mr. Wesley placed the greatest confidence in him. During the same year, he accompanied Mr. Wesley in part of his journeys, and an arrangement was made that the societies in Ireland should be visited annually by Mr. Wesley and Dr. Coke alternately. The acquaintance then commenced with Irish Methodism was continued to the time of Dr. Coke's death. In the course of the journeyings as a Methodist apostle, he had to visit South Petherton, where he had been the poor man's benefactor and the sick man's comforter. They missed him after his dismissal, repented of their folly, and, on hearing of his coming to visit the place, they said: "Well, we *chimed* him out of the church, now we will atone for our error by ringing him into the parish," so he had a joyful welcome.

In 1782, Mr. Wesley deemed it right to separate the Irish from the English Conference, and hold a separate Conference annually in Ireland; and in 1782, Dr. Coke was sent to preside at the first which was held in that country. He soon discovered and corrected many irregularities, travelled much amongst the people, having discretionary power in that respect, and he soon obtained the goodwill of the Irish Methodists, so that they desired Mr. Wesley to appoint him annually to conduct the business of their Conference. From that time forward, till 1813, he was seldom absent, and for nearly thirty years he filled the presidential chair there with honour, approbation, and usefulness. Dr. Whitehead, in his "Life of Mr. Wesley," speaks of Dr. Coke's conduct in Ireland in terms of great commendation; but, in the same work, he speaks of Dr. Coke's conduct in London in terms so different, that when Dr. Coke

had Mr. Wesley's "Life" reprinted for the Irish Conference, he eliminated or modified all Dr. Whitehead's allusions to himself.

About the time of the close of the American War, which ended in their independence, Mr. Francis Asbury, Mr. Wesley's representative in America, wrote to ask for more help, more missionaries, and pointed out the condition the Methodists were in at that time owing to the war, being equally destitute of baptism for their children, and of the Lord's Supper for themselves. The appeal was pressing and urgent; Mr. Asbury considered himself only a lay-helper, and not qualified to administer the Sacraments. In February, 1784, Mr. Wesley described this condition of things to Dr. Coke, and proposed to ordain him and send him out to America, as superintendent of the Methodist work there, and to give it a more definite and organised form. Startled, at first, at the bold proposal of Mr. Wesley, he took time to consider the matter, had it fully explained at the ensuing Conference, and on 2nd September, 1784, Dr. Coke was ordained superintendent accordingly. A short time afterwards, Mr. Wesley, aided by Dr. Coke, and the Rev. James Creighton, presbyter, ordained Richard Whatcoat and Thomas Vasey as assistants for the work in America, and all three arrived in that country on 3rd November, 1784. Dr. Coke spent some time in preaching in New York, after which he proceeded to Philadelphia, and resided with Mr. Basset, one of the Executive Council for the State of Delaware. On Sunday, 14th November, he accompanied his host to a chapel built in the midst of a vast forest, and he preached to an immense assembly, and afterwards administered the Lord's Supper to about six hundred communicants. As the service was closing, the Doctor perceived a plainly-dressed, robust, but venerable-looking man urging his way through the congregation towards him; on ascending the pulpit, the stranger took the Doctor in his arms and kissed him. That was the first meeting of Francis Asbury and Dr. Thomas Coke; they wanted no introduction. Immediately afterwards they started on a preaching tour, which in a short time covered a thousand miles. They then gathered in Baltimore at the end of December, 1784, with as many preachers as could be convened, and on 27th December, reading the instructions sent by Mr. Wesley to Mr. Asbury and the societies in America, Dr. Coke ordained Francis Asbury a bishop. Mr. Wesley

had used the word superintendent in the case of both Dr. Coke's ordination and that intended for Mr. Asbury; but on taking a review of the circumstances around him, Dr. Coke, in the case of Mr. Asbury, used the word bishop to describe the office to which he was called and ordained. In doing so, he raised a great controversy, which was carried on occasionally for years afterwards. But the result has proved the wisdom of Dr. Coke's choice; and so the Methodist Episcopal Church in America, with its bishops and elders, was established on a broad and deep basis; and during the last week in December, 1884, there will be great centennial rejoicings in all the great centres of America, for the good work so auspiciously commenced by Dr. Coke, and which has received such abundant prosperity from the hands of God during the intervening one hundred years. Dr. Coke remained in the United States till 1st June, 1785, and visited General Washington, the first president of America. He also founded a College, called Cokesbury, which cost £10,000; but that, with the chapel belonging to it, was soon afterwards totally destroyed by fire. On his return to England, Mr. Wesley and the preachers severely censured Dr. Coke for exceeding his instructions in using the word bishop for himself, and in his ordination of Mr. Asbury; and to mark his displeasure in a permanent form, Mr. Wesley left Dr. Coke's name off the Minutes of Conference in 1785. But that did not greatly disturb Dr. Coke; he had a conviction that he had done right, so went on with his usual work regardless of the intended slight.

It was necessary that Mr. Wesley should take public notice of what the Doctor had done, partly as a warning to others not to exceed their authority, but more as a probable means of allaying the angry feeling manifested by some of the clergy whom Mr. Wesley desired not to offend. This was not the first, nor was it the last occasion on which Mr. Wesley and Dr. Coke were in antagonism; but the zeal, energy, and devotion of Dr. Coke, in all he undertook, led Mr. Wesley the more readily to forget offences after he had delivered his mind thereon. In 1785, the Doctor travelled as usual in England, and he extended his journeys to Scotland, Ireland, and Wales. In 1786, he formed the first Methodist society in the Norman Isles, and preached in the church at St. Heliers, Jersey; in this work he was aided by John de

Quetteville, and the work was the same year, and the two following, greatly promoted by Robert Carr Brackenbury and Adam Clarke.

At the Norman Isles, the Doctor heard of an effort having been made to establish Methodism in Nova Scotia, and he at once sought for a few young men to accompany him to that land as missionaries. He found three young missionaries, and with them sailed from Gravesend, in September, 1786. The voyage then commenced was one of the most perilous on record, not excepting that of St. Paul. Driven and tossed by the wind and waves, and at their mercy again and again, enduring the agonies of death many times, and at last driven by the winds whither they had not intended, instead of landing in Nova Scotia, on Christmas morning their weather-beaten bark cast anchor in the harbour of Antigua, in the West Indies.

Man proposes, God disposes. Dr. Coke thought Nova Scotia wanted help by missionaries. God knew that the West Indies were in still greater want of help of the same kind; so on landing, he found in a resident family there, that of Mr. Gilbert, a people ready to welcome the Gospel, and to show kindness to missionaries. It is a most interesting story, how Methodism was thus strangely introduced into those islands, and how the black population thereby found their greatest friends and benefactors. Having thus commenced the good work, Dr. Coke devoted his utmost energies to its support and extension, and he lived to see the mission spread to several of the islands. From Antigua, where he left the young missionaries, he sailed to South Carolina, and paid another visit to America, where he visited various societies, related some of his experiences in the West Indies, and sailed from New York in June, 1787, arriving in Dublin in time to meet Mr. Wesley at the Irish Conference. There he related the overruling providence of God in so thoroughly diverting their voyage, and described what he had witnessed in the several West Indian Isles he had surveyed. All were greatly interested in what they heard, and acknowledged the hand of God in it all. He returned to England with Mr. Wesley and eleven of the preachers, to attend the English Conference; on crossing the Irish Channel they very narrowly escaped shipwreck, as the vessel struck on a rock; but God again answered prayer.

At the Conference held in Manchester, 1787, urgent appeals were

made for missionaries for Newfoundland, and Dr. Coke urged the claims of the West Indies, for which he succeeded in securing the appointment of three more missionaries; he then accompanied Mr. Wesley in a visit to the Norman Isles, which proved as dangerous as the previous one from Ireland. Even in the Bay of Alderney, they were rescued from great peril in answer to prayer. After a brief sojourn there, on his return to England, he spent most of the year in begging from house to house for the West India missions, and his great politeness of manner, and earnestness of appeal, enabled him to collect a considerable amount in small sums, for that work. After the Conference of 1788, he again went to the West Indies with the young men volunteers. He remained some time, visiting various islands, and settling missionaries as far as he had them, made observations of the further requirements, and in February, 1789, reached South America. There he met and travelled with Bishop Asbury, and together they held several Conferences, and were cheered by the large increase of members reported at each, the total members that year in America being 43,265. He spent four months in that country, and reached Liverpool in July. At the Conference he again appealed to the preachers for any help they could render on behalf of the poor slaves; and they, on their return to the circuits, spoke of the work Dr. Coke had done, so prepared the way for his visits; and for sixteen months, the doctor travelled over England, begging in every town for the support of the missionaries, and preaching every evening where he was visiting. No rebuff, no refusal, no indignity offered to him, hindered his progress; he heard the call of the poor negroes, "Come over and help us," and that kept him ever in action in seeking help for them.

Dr. Coke was the father and founder of Methodist Missions, both Foreign and Home. A copy of the first proposals he issued for establishing Foreign Missions a century ago has been preserved; Mr. S. D. Waddy, M.P., has had it republished in facsimile, and a most interesting document it is. The Doctor had a great soul in a small body; and once having entered into the experience of the new birth, he believed that the Gospel was the only means of saving every man; he therefore resolved to do his utmost towards sending it to the very ends of the earth. He was again in the West Indies, the first week in

January, 1791, and during the same month went again to America; but the ship got entangled in the isles along the Florida coast, and on landing, he found his way to some of the Indian tribes in America, amongst whom he was travelling, on 2nd March, the day on which the Rev. John Wesley died in London. Of this death he did not hear till many weeks afterwards, and he was unable to procure a passage to England till the middle of May.

On reaching London he found new and perplexing troubles. He was left by Mr. Wesley the senior of three trustees to Mr. Wesley's family papers; but during his absence in America, all the papers had been placed in the hands of Dr. Whitehead, that he might write a "Life" of Mr. Wesley from them. Dr. Whitehead refused to Dr. Coke his right to hold or even see the papers till he had used them for the "Life." Dr. Coke felt the obligation of senior trustee, and tried to enforce his just claim to have the papers. The result was a most painful contention in the London Society, which continued four or five years, and in which Dr. Coke was the most prominent figure. Dr. Coke then arranged for Mr. Moore to write a "Life" of Mr. Wesley to be issued by the Conference Press. When written, Dr. Coke read the proofs, but wrote none of the work; only as senior trustee he had his name put on the title-page with that of Henry Moore. That book sold ten thousand copies in six weeks, and twenty thousand copies by the end of 1792. That has been considered the official "Life" of Mr. Wesley ever since.

During the summer of 1791, Dr. Coke was preaching in Paris, and tried to establish a Methodist Society there; but the French people showed no sympathy with Methodism in the capital. It was a quarter of a century after that before a society was formed in Paris; but in 1811 the Doctor took much interest in the French prisoners in England, and arranged for a missionary to visit and preach to them. In 1792, Dr. Coke began the preparation of a popular Commentary on the Bible, on which he spent about £10,000, and issued it in numbers. This work he had in hand fifteen years. It was to him a financial loss. He also published other works, on which he bestowed much time and labour, his object being to place good books on easy terms in the hands of the poor. His publishing speculations were both a great trouble and loss, and to rid himself of the responsibility, he sold £10,000 worth of

books in sheets for £3000. In that enterprise his motive was pure and good, but he had neither the time nor the experience requisite for carrying out such undertakings. He employed Mr. Samuel Drew of St. Austell for some years as his editor and assistant writer. After the death of the Doctor, Mr. Drew wrote and published his "Life."

At the Conference of 1793 the questions of holding service in church hours, and the administration of the Sacraments by the preachers, were warmly debated. Dr. Coke took sides with the people, and advocated the conceding of those points. That gave offence to the more conservative of the preachers, and resulted in a considerable falling off of the subscriptions to his missions; but he held on his way. During the summer of 1794 he visited Holland in order to get protection for some of his societies in the West Indies under Dutch rule. His efforts were unavailing; the toleration he desired for the negro slaves was not conceded till 1804, ten years afterwards. In 1796 his heart was set on a mission to the Foulah people in Africa, and much money was collected and spent in sending missionaries there; but the heart of Dr. Coke was almost broken when the Mission failed. The time and surrounding circumstances were unfavourable; but in August the same year he sailed once more for America, and when there manifested a desire to settle in that country. In that purpose he was strongly opposed by the English Conference after his return; but his restless spirit started him again to America after the Conference of 1797. The ship was seized by a French privateer, and the Doctor lost his clothes, but was allowed to escape with his books and papers, the French captain finding a Methodist preacher, even a bishop, a very unsuitable prize. On returning to England, in 1798, he formed a plan for introducing the Gospel to the degraded people of Ireland. In 1799 he wrote to the Bishop of London a letter containing a plan of union between the Methodists and the Church; the Bishop did not see a way open for such a union. In 1800 Dr. Coke opened a Methodist mission into Wales, which soon became a great success, and has been expanding ever since. In 1803, the Doctor paid his ninth visit to America, and during his stay preached before Congress.

Visiting Bristol, early in 1805, Dr. Coke was introduced by the Rev. John Pawson to Miss Penelope Goulding Smith, a lady of fortune

and deep piety, then aged forty-three, who gave Dr. Coke one hundred guineas for his missions. On calling again upon the lady, she made her gift two hundred. Dr. Coke was astonished, delighted; they fell in love with each other, and were married in April, 1805. A plain carriage was provided, and she travelled with her husband all over the land on their beloved and benevolent mission, she devoting most of her fortune to the work of God. They carried all their books, papers, and wearing apparel with them continually, as they kept no home. In this way they lived most amiably together till 25th January, 1811, when she died at the City Road, London, and was interred in Brecon Church. A long and interesting account of her life Dr. Coke published in the *Methodist Magazine* for 1812. Having enjoyed married life for six years, in December, 1811, he found in Miss Ann Loxdale another suitable companion, the Doctor was then sixty-four, and the lady was fifty-six, they married, and were as happy as her feeble health would permit; but she died just one year after marriage, at York, December, 1812, and was interred at Brecon.

In 1805, Dr. Coke established Home Missions in England, which he largely supported himself, the design being to send preachers to places where there were no regular Methodist circuits. The scheme was much opposed, but it became a success, and in 1808, thirty-five missionaries were employed. For three or four years he was constantly employed in visiting the societies, attending Conferences, and begging from door to door for missions to the heathen. From September, 1809, to January, 1810, in house-to-house visits, he begged one thousand pounds for the great work to which he had devoted his life. When, in 1811, Dr. Coke pleaded most earnestly for missionaries to be employed amongst the French soldiers captured by England during the war, the Conference, after mature consideration, seeing no way open to support such missionaries, declined its consent, until Dr. Coke, who had long been accustomed to such replies, offered to become responsible for the entire cost of the mission. Then the Conference appointed the Rev. William Toase as the first missionary, and for several years the reports of the work were most encouraging. At the same Conference, 1811, the first missionaries were sent out by Dr. Coke to Sierra Leone, primarily to establish elementary schools, then to preach the Gospel.

On the death of Dr. Coke's second wife, he felt himself free to commence a new mission, which he had been considering occasionally since 1784—namely, a mission to India. In the *Arminian Magazine* for 1792, there is a letter of his on the subject. As all his time, energy, and fortune had been absorbed in the other missions he had originated, he was not previously able to look at India. Now that he had a little leisure, his mind was fixed on India; but all his friends earnestly tried to dissuade him, at the age of sixty-six, from such an expedition. To his endeared friend, Samuel Drew, he wrote: "I am now dead to Europe and alive to India." No arguments, no difficulties, could in the least alter his purpose. At the Liverpool Conference of 1813, he appealed with tears and entreaties to go out with young missionaries; but the prospect was not such as secured their ready assent. At last he said, with impassioned vehemence: "It will break my heart if I go not to India!" and to make a smooth path he introduced the names of seven missionaries, and generously offered to bear the whole cost of their outfit to the extent of £6000. Such a noble act of unexampled generosity swept away all opposition; the missionaries were appointed, two of them being printers, a printing press and types were bought, and all arrangements being made, the noble band started on their glorious mission on 1st January, 1814. All went favourably for four months as they voyaged to the East. On the first of May, Dr. Coke hinted to Mr. Clough that he was a little indisposed, but he thought it of no consequence; he conversed and walked on deck as usual. On 2nd May, the indisposition was not increased, and he took some aperient medicine, shaking hands at night with his companions as he retired to his cabin, and commending them to God. It had been his practice to rise soon after five every morning, and his servant had orders to call him at that time. On the morning of 3rd May, the servant knocked at his cabin door, but receiving no reply, he opened the door, and found the venerable man prostrate on the floor. The Doctor was examined by the captain and the surgeon, but he was dead; he had died alone, none but God was there when his happy, released spirit returned to God who gave it. Dr. Coke died 3rd May, 1814, aged sixty-six years, and was interred the same day, in a strong deal coffin, in the Indian Ocean. Such was the end of the life of one of the

noblest, most heroic, and most devoted men of God the world has ever known. The seven missionaries thus deprived of their father, friend, and patron, had no resources but in God, and, trusting alone in Him, their way was opened in a manner God only could have opened it.

Dr. Coke was possessed of many excellencies above the common order; but he was human, and had often to suffer from his own indiscretion and haste. He had faults, and he knew them; they often gave him trouble and pain. But his virtues were resplendent, illuminated with a glory heaven only could have bestowed, and future generations can know him only as the devoted, generous, and seraphic Dr. Coke.

A marble monument to his memory was erected in City Road Chapel, London, at the expense of Methodist ministers and missionaries, on which is the following record:—

Sacred to the Memory of The Rev. THOMAS COKE, LL.D.,
Who was born at Brecon, the IX. of September, MDCCXLVII., and died the III. of May MDCCCXIV.
After a zealous Ministry of several years in the Established Church,
He gave up himself, A.D. MDCCLXXVI., to the direction of the Rev. John Wesley, M.A.,
And did the work of an Evangelist, with much success, in various parts of Great Britain and Ireland.
He was appointed, A.D. MDCCLXXXIV., the first Superintendent of the "Methodist Episcopal Church" in America.
To him, also, were confided the Foreign Missions of the Methodists,
In support of which he expended nearly all his patrimonial fortune,
And encountered toils and self-denials, which the Christian world beheld with admiration.
By the blessing of God on the Missions to the Negroes, in the West Indies, commenced by him, A.D. MDCCLXXVI.,
Fifteen Thousand Persons had been formed, before his death, into religious Societies,
And a foundation laid for the civilisation and salvation of that degraded class of human beings
To the Negro race upon their native continent, as well as in the islands of their bondage,
His compassions were extended;
And he set the first example, in modern days, of efforts for the spiritual emancipation of Western Africa.

After crossing the Atlantic eighteen times, in the service of the souls of men,
His unwearied spirit was stirred within him to take a part in the noble enterprise of evangelising British India;
And he sailed from England, A.D. MDCCCXIII., as the Leader of the first Methodist Missionarie sent to Ceylon.
But this "burning and shining light," which, in the Western world, had guided thousands into the paths of peace,
Had now fulfilled its course; and suddenly, yet rich in evening splendour, sunk into the shadows of mortality.
He died on the voyage; and his remains were committed to the great deep, until the sea shall give up her dead.

Alexander Mather.

[*Born*, 1733 : *Entered the Ministry*, 1757 : *Died*, 1800.]

AMONGST the most prominent, laborious, and useful preachers in Methodism in the eighteenth century, must be ranked Alexander Mather. A man of ability, sincere piety, judgment, sagacity, and energy, combined with a gentlemanly presence, he might have been a distinguished lawyer or statesman, had he been favoured with the requisite education and training. As it is, he has the remarkable distinction of being the only untitled bishop in English Methodism. Towards the end of his life, the Rev. John Wesley gave special ordination to eighteen of his preachers, to qualify them to administer the Sacraments to the congregations to which they were set apart in Scotland, on Foreign Missions stations, and in America. Three were specially ordained for service in England, after Mr. Wesley's death, one of whom was Alexander Mather, whose designation was that of superintendent or bishop, like Dr. Coke. There were reasons, after Mr. Wesley's death, why Mr. Mather did not exercise the authority given to him; but to that position he was entitled, by the same appointment and designation as Dr. Coke; and the latter, by virtue of his ordination as superintendent,—bishop,—ordained Francis Asbury in America to the office of bishop, and they two founded the Methodist Episcopal Church in the United States, in December, 1784, and Coke and Asbury are at the head of their list of

bishops. Mr. Wesley discerned in Mr. Mather the qualifications necessary for the office, or he would not have ordained him thereto; the fact that Mr. Mather never enforced his claim to the office, is due to his wise discretion, prudence, and self-restraint.

On this subject, the following extract from a letter of John Pawson's, in Mr. Tyerman's "Life of John Wesley," will be new to most readers. He says:—

> "Mr. Wesley knew the state of the societies in England required such measures to be taken, or many of the people would leave the Connexion; and had the preachers, after his death, only acted upon his plan, and granted the people the Sacraments, no division would have taken place. He foresaw that the Methodists would soon become a distinct body. He was much in favour of Episcopal government: in order, therefore, to preserve all that is valuable in the Church of England among the Methodists, he ordained Mr. Mather and Dr. Coke bishops. These he undoubtedly designed should ordain others. Mr. Mather told us so at the Manchester Conference of 1791."

This is clear testimony, and shows the estimation in which Mr. Wesley held his Scotch preacher.

Alexander Mather was born at Brechin, Scotland, in February, 1733. His parents brought him up religiously, and gave him a fair amount of education. He began to learn Latin; and strangely enough, his teacher was a man who prayed with his pupils. Young Mather was deeply affected by those prayers, and by the efforts of his parents he was preserved in a great measure from those follies and vices which children too often fall into; and he took pleasure in reading good books, and in other exercises of religion. In his youth he was exposed to peril and danger, and his life was preserved to him on one or two occasions only by the interposition of divine Providence, events which made a deep and lasting impression on his mind. His school days soon ended, for at the age of twelve he was assisting his father in his business as a baker, a business which did not seem to exactly accord with his preference. Three times his father made efforts to put him to some more congenial occupation, but failure attended them all, which gave his father much uneasiness; and his home became to him so uncomfortable, that he ran away and joined the army, when little more than twelve years old. He was present at the Battle of Culloden, when he saw many of his comrades killed, but he was preserved. He left the army as

unceremoniously as he left his home; but his father refused to take him in; and it was not till the town authorities interfered that he obtained an entrance. He remained at home helping his father till May, 1751, when he left home finally; and, having a good knowledge of his business, he went to Perth, and after a few months resolved to go to London, and sailed from Montrose for that purpose in June, 1752.

A stranger in London, even at that time, did not find things pleasant when money was a necessity. He found occupation at several places for short periods, and lodged with families where he was kindly treated. In 1753, he met with a young Scotch lassie who had lived in his father's house in his infancy, and in her he found so congenial a companion that, after a brief courtship, they were married on 14th February, 1753, although at that time he was out of employment. Here, again, he soon saw the hand of Providence on his behalf. Standing at the corner of a street near Moorgate, with his apron on, and having the look of activity about him, he was accosted by a stranger and asked if he wanted employment. An engagement followed which was to continue for a year, his employer being Mr. Marriot, a baker in Finsbury. It was soon found that master and man were of congenial minds; both went to worship at the Foundry and heard the Wesleys preach. The servant made bold to tell his master his objection to Sunday baking. After mature consideration, Mr. Marriot called on all the bakers in the locality, and all but two agreed to give up Sunday work. That was Mr. Mather's first effort at reformation. His young wife heard Charles Wesley preach, and her conversion followed. Early in 1754, John Wesley returned to London, after his long illness, and Mr. Mather was converted under the first sermon he heard John Wesley preach. Now commenced a new course of life. The change which had been wrought in him was real and manifest. He soon became acquainted with Mr. Wesley, who, promptly discovering intelligent ability, appointed him first a band-leader, then a class-leader; and as the work was congenial to him, he was earnest and devoted, and soon desired a wider sphere of labour. His earnestness was excessive. The record he has left of one day's work, as a baker and preacher, left him only two or three hours for sleep, and that kind of labour he continued as far as he had strength

for nearly three years, earning for himself a reputation for usefulness any one might envy.

In 1757, Mr. Wesley accepted him as an itinerant preacher, appointed him to the Epworth Circuit, and he walked there from London, not having the means to pay for riding. The circuit was a large one, and during the year he introduced Methodism into Boston, under circumstances of riotous cruelty; but he persevered, and succeeded. At Nottingham he attended a poor criminal, and the night before his execution saw him converted and happy. During the three years following, he was walking and preaching daily in Newcastle, York, and Birmingham, as centres of operation, taking twelve to twenty miles round each, and preaching constantly. At Wolverhampton he preached in a new chapel; but riotous men not only opposed him and the Gospel, but pulled the chapel down. Mr. Mather knew where was the limit of power, and knowing that the law had not afforded him that protection he had a right to, he secured the erection of a new chapel at the expense of the authorities. In 1770, he travelled in the Bristol Circuit, but in 1773 was in London, rendering such help as he was able. Difficulties arose with Mr. Wesley's book property, and Mr. Mather was instructed to make a full report thereon. It is a brief but interesting statement, and shows how Methodist literature was spreading at that time. It is as follows:—

"Books in London, valued at . .	£3,754	4	0
Books at Bristol, „ . .	4,253	4	8
Books in the Country, „ . .	2,716	1	8
Cash, ...	183	2	11
Debts, ...	23	2	1
	£10,921	15	4
Value of Stock, February, 1772, .	8,833	0	7
Increase in Value in One Year, .	£2,096	14	9"

During the same year he was travelling the Canterbury district, which included a large portion of Kent. In 1775, Mr. Wesley was dangerously ill in Ireland, and the papers reported his death. Mr. Mather saw that report when about to preach at Sheerness. Startled by the report, at first he hesitated to believe it true, then prayed and opened

his Bible on these words, "I will add unto thy days fifteen years," Isa. xxxviii. 5; he went to the chapel and publicly prayed that the prayer might be answered, as in the case of Hezekiah. The prayer was answered; Wesley did live fifteen years after that illness. In 1777, Mr. Mather travelled the Colne district, and there, as in his previous ones, he saw the hand of God in prospering his work continually.

In 1784, Mr. Wesley included his name in his Deed of Declaration, as one of the first Legal Hundred of Methodist preachers. At the Conference of 1786, Dr. Coke said, that Methodist services in large towns ought to be held in church hours, and urged, as one reason, that nearly all the converted clergymen were Calvinists; upon which Charles Wesley, in a loud voice and angry tone, cried out: "No," the only word he spoke during all the sittings of the Conference. Immediately, Alexander Mather, who had travelled extensively, got up and confirmed what Dr. Coke had said. In 1788, Mr. Mather took a prominent part in trying to heal the breach made in the Dewsbury Society, chiefly through the insincerity of John Atlay. During the same year he was ordained by Mr. Wesley, with two other preachers, Mr. Moore and Mr. Rankin, for the purpose of administering the Sacraments, and for the purpose of ordaining others. When Mr. Wesley died, many thought that Mr. Mather was the most likely preacher to be his successor in directing the varied organisations of Methodism; but when he saw the strain which everywhere prevailed not to alter the usage of the past, he made no effort at supreme authority, or even at superiority, because of his ordination, but contented himself to be one amongst his brethren, though he would have had a large following had he taken any action in the matter. He took a foremost part in the trial of Mr. Alexander Kilham, in 1796, and indeed in all the movements of Methodism, which, by his extensive knowledge and experience he was well qualified to do. Without wishing to be thought so, he was really a prince amongst his brethren, and was twice elected president of the Conference. He was a man who had faith in God, but he had faith in himself also, and, consequently, what he had the power to do himself, he did with his might. Once when John Wesley was travelling in Scotland, Mr. Mather was

appointed to be his companion and personal attendant. Knowing Mr. Wesley's habit of rising at four every morning, he thought he would be early, so called him at half-past three. "Come in, Mr. Abbot," was Wesley's bold response, and Alexander entered, but stood in blank amazement, just within. "What is the matter?" asked Wesley; to which Mather replied, "Sir, I thought to be before you, so called half-an-hour before the time; but seeing you up and dressed, with your overcoat on and whip in hand, taught me a lesson, never to try to go before Mr. Wesley." In 1781, A. Mather, C. Hopper, and J. Benson travelled together in Leeds. Benson was a young man, just married, but he published some of his sermons by request. Mrs. Mather, jealous of her husband's honour as head of the circuit, moved him to catechise Benson for publishing without telling his superintendent. Mather remarked, "Mr. Wesley has entrusted me with the staff of office, and I am resolved to use it." It was the Quarterly Meeting, and Benson, much grieved, rose to leave the room. Up rose the gigantic Hopper, who with a loud voice said, whilst laying his hand on Benson's shoulder, "Stop, stop, young man; I too have had the staff of office placed in my hands by Mr. Wesley, but I took care never to break any man's head with it." Benson returned, and harmony was restored. Mather's temper was imperious; he knew it, and strove to curb it, often with deep penitence and sorrow; but it was his nature, and he found many occasions when it was of much service to Methodism. He had a remarkably strong, natural understanding.

No man in Methodism knew Mr. Mather better than John Pawson. They travelled together and attended nearly forty Conferences together. After his death he wrote and published his own impressions of the man and his work. A few extracts from that record will better describe Mr. Mather than any words of a stranger to his person. Mr. Pawson wrote as follows:—

"At the general Conferences, he took an active part in all our affairs. During the life of Mr. Wesley, he was for many years what some persons called his right-hand man. He certainly assisted him very much on various difficult occasions, and was a principal member of the Select Committee, which he made choice of to advise and assist him in various important affairs which from time to time were laid before the Conference. And since Mr. Wesley's death, it is well known, that nothing of any moment was done amongst us, but he was more or less concerned therein. The preachers in general paid

a great regard to his judgment; as many of them had been long acquainted with him, and were well satisfied with his uprightness, and that he had not only the interest of particular persons, but also of the whole Connexion, very much at heart. I never was yet acquainted with the man who was more ready to serve a friend than he was. It seemed to give him the most sensible pleasure to engage in any extraordinary difficult affairs, in order to assist those who desired his help; and he certainly was well qualified to transact almost any kind of business, for he was blest with a large share of sense, and had a general knowledge of men and things.

"Considered as a man, he was possessed of real greatness of mind, so that where the honour of God, or the salvation of souls was concerned, as he would spare no pains so he dreaded no danger, and was not ashamed to speak with his enemies in the gate. He feared the face of no man. He was remarkably ready in answering those who opposed the work of God, in however high a station they might stand: for although he highly reverenced magistrates, and gave honour to whom honour was due, yet he was not to be terrified from his duty by the threatenings of any man, but would resolutely go forward with his work, in the name and in the strength of the Lord God. He had a large share of trials of this kind, being obliged more than once to appear before rulers, and answer for himself. But the Lord in whom he trusted did not leave him to himself on those occasions, but made him remarkably useful in procuring peace for his poor persecuted and oppressed people, and in delivering them out of the hands of their unreasonable and cruel enemies on different occasions. At such times, he would do that which many others could not, as he had a constitution which would bear the greatest fatigue, and endure the greatest hardship. And it may be said, with the greatest degree of truth, that he never spared himself, but wore out his health and strength in hard labour, and in continual toil, night and day, till at last the weary wheels of life stood still, his natural strength being fairly worn out, so that he could labour no more.

"For many years, as he interested himself in everything which concerned our Connexion, so he was constantly employed in the greatest difficulties which happened among us. And as no one was better qualified for this kind of work, so no man would more heartily or more cheerfully engage therein. Inasmuch as for many years past I have acted in concert with him, on a variety of very trying occasions, I can testify from my own knowledge what unwearied pains he has taken, both with his tongue and his pen, what patience and long suffering he has exercised, when having to do either with very ignorant or with headstrong men, in order to preserve or restore peace to particular societies. On all such occasions, although I sometimes differed in judgment from him, yet I most sincerely believe that his eye was single, and that he only wished to promote the honour of God and the prosperity of His work.

"Considered as a minister, he certainly was highly honoured of God, not only in that he was blessed with very excellent gifts and qualifications for the work unto which the Lord had called him, but in that his labours in the Gospel were attended with very considerable success. His understanding was remarkably clear in the whole mystery of man's redemption by Christ Jesus, in the nature and extent of Gospel salvation, and in the way which the blessed God hath pointed out for fallen man to be put in possession of all the unsearchable riches of Christ. For although he was born in Scotland, and brought up a Presbyterian, yet it is well known that he was strongly attached to the Established Church. He attended the service of the Church and the Sacrament whenever opportunity served, and exhorted others to do the same. He was blessed with a

sound judgment, a quick apprehension, and a retentive memory. He firmly believed that Jesus Christ tasted death for every man, and faithfully and constantly offered salvation to all in His name. His zeal for the salvation of souls was very great, and his diligence in the work was highly exemplary. He was favoured with a strong constitution, which he did not spare. By travelling long journeys in bad roads, in all sorts of weather, and often preaching three, sometimes four,—yea, five times a-day,—he wore it out in hard labour, till his Lord said unto him, 'Come up hither.' It may be said of him with the greatest propriety, *in labours more abundant*, for he certainly followed the Apostle's rule, 'Preach the Word; be instant in season, out of season.' He rushed through every open door, and was instrumental in opening not a few, planting the Gospel in many places. And, according to the direction given to the prophet, he lift up his voice like a trumpet, and cried aloud to sinners of all sorts, solemnly warning them in the name of the Lord.

"Thus did my dear friend spend his forty-three years of itinerancy among us, and wore out as firm a constitution in diligent and faithful labour as almost any man was ever blest with. But, like Moses, he had 'respect to the recompense of reward,' which awaits those who turn many to righteousness. And as he spent his life in the service of God, he found the advantage arising from it upon his death-bed. He then had the supporting and comforting presence of the Lord with him, so that he bore with unbroken patience a very long and painful illness, and witnessed in death the sufficiency of divine grace to make him more than conqueror over his last enemy."

In the first circuit he travelled, Epworth, where Mr. Wesley was born, he had to visit and preach in the following towns then in that circuit,—Gainsborough, Grimsby, Doncaster, Rotherham, Sheffield, and other places. At Rotherham, he had such manifestations of the power and grace of God as enabled him to know and understand what entire devotedness to God meant; and the doctrine of Christian Perfection he preached ever afterwards. An account of that happy experience he sent to Mr. Wesley, who printed it in his Magazine with much commendation. That sustained him in all the trials and conflicts of life, and during his protracted illness of some months, he was happy amidst his sufferings. He exchanged much joyous conversation with his esteemed friend, Mr. Robert Spence, at York, whilst confined at home; and one morning on awaking he exclaimed, "Why did you call me back? I have been in paradise." Nearly his last words on earth were, "He that I have served for nearly fifty years will not forsake me now. Glory be to God and the Lamb, for ever and ever!" In that spirit he quietly fell into a slumber, and silently, and almost imperceptibly, the spirit escaped to paradise, on Friday, 22nd August, 1800, aged sixty-seven years.

The records he has left behind him will preserve his name and memory fresh through the succeeding generations of Methodists. He was an industrious man. The writer of these lines has in his library a considerable collection of the manuscript outlines of sermons he wrote on the back of old letters, and in one instance the outline is written over a note in the handwriting of Dr. Coke, both which are plainly to be read. He has also unpublished letters of his which indicate ability, discretion, and clear judgment. His portrait, which was several times engraved, gives a fair index to the character of the man, who deemed it to be his greatest honour to serve God faithfully, and to wear out his life and strength in that service. When Mr. Wesley printed the account of Mr. Mather's Christian experience, he added a note at the end which began thus: "I earnestly desire that all our preachers would seriously consider the preceding account."

Mr. Mather used his pen but little, and that chiefly in defence of Methodism. In 1788, he published a pamphlet on the Dewsbury Chapel case. Again, in 1796, he joined his friend, John Pawson, in writing two pamphlets in reply to Alexander Kilham, first, "An Affectionate Address to the Methodist Societies," and second, "An Appeal, with a Word of Advice." In 1797, he published "An Address to the Members of the Societies," and also "A Defence of the Conference" in expelling Mr. Kilham. There are also two of his sermons in the *Arminian Magazine* for 1796.